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AGAINST THE

ERRORS OF INFIDELITY, ENTHUSIASM, AND DISLOYALTY;

OR, A

COLLECTION OF TRACTS

ON THE

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION, GOVERNMENT, AND ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

LONDON,

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A

TREATISE

ON THE

NATURE and CONSTITUTION

OF THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH;

WHEREIN ARE SET FORTH

The FORM of its GOVERNMENT,

The EXTENT of its POWERS,

AND

The LIMITS of our OBEDIENCE.

Ἡ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἁγιωσύνη οὐκ ἔστιν ἀκριβῶς ἐντελὴς, καὶ τοιαύτη ὥστε μηδενὸς προσδεῖσθαι, εἰ καὶ γε καλῶς μὲν ἔχει τῆς τελειότητος· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὰν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἀφ' ἧ πᾶσαν τὴν εὐπρέπειαν καὶ κόσμον λαμβάνει, παντελῶς συνεγωδῇ, τότε μὲν ἁγνείαν καὶ ὁσιότητα πάντως τελείαν ὁιονεί τι ἱμάτιον λευκότατον καὶ λαμπρότατον ἀμφέξεται.

Χριστιανισμῦ Στοιχειώσις.

BY A LAYMAN.

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M. DCC. LXXIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AT a Time when the Preſs teems with the moſt ſcurrilous Invectives againſt the fundamental Doctrines of our Religion, and even the News-Papers are converted into Trumpets of Sedition, by the Enemies of the Church, Silence on the Part of its Friends becomes criminal, and a cold Neutrality is inexcuſable. We are called upon, each according to his Ability, to ſtand forth in Defence of the Doctrines and Diſcipline of our Church; both which are equally expoſed to the Malevolence of ſome, and the inſidious Artifices of others.

The following Treatiſe, extracted chiefly from Archbiſhop Potter's *excellent Diſcourſe concerning Church-Government, it is hoped, will not be deemed a Publication, at this Time,*

either unneceſſary or uſeleſs. It was digeſted principally with a View to the Inſtruction of a Perſon deſirous of Information on the Nature and Conſtitution of the Church; and it is hoped, that it may be of ſome Benefit to others, who require Inſtruction on the ſame important Subject: This at leaſt may be ſaid in its Favor, that it lies within a narrow Compaſs, and is level to the Capacity of all.

How unnatural it is that the Members of any Society ſhould be ignorant of its Origin and Eſtabliſhment, the Principles on which it was inſtituted, and the Rules and Orders by which its Credit and Dignity have been ſupported? This Ignorance, which on other Occaſions is only extremely abſurd, when applied to the Principles of our Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution,

ſtitution, is highly reprehenſible in itſelf, and attended with the moſt dreadful Conſequences; to this Ignorance the Adverſary artfully applies himſelf, under the ſpecious Character of a candid Enquirer after Truth; an Advocate for Liberty of Conſcience, and one who makes very great Allowance for the Scruples of his weak Brethren.

Be it our Endeavour by timely Information, to prepare ourſelves to give a reaſonable Anſwer to him that enquireth concerning the Faith which we profeſs, the Doctrines which we maintain, and the Diſcipline to which we ſubmit ourſelves, in all Humility, as the Servants of Chriſt.

This Information, we flatter ourſelves, may in ſome Reſpects be gathered

thered from the following Treatise; which, without any farther Apology, is commended to the serious Attention of every candid and unprejudiced Reader; not without the most earnest Desire, that thro' God's Blessing, it may prosper, to the Edification of the Ignorant, the Conviction of the Erroneous, and the Establishment of the Faithful; that the ever Blessed Trinity may be worshipped as such, in all Sincerity and Truth; that Christians may no longer dissemble with GOD *and with each other, in Transactions of the most serious Nature; that their Conduct may be directed by Knowledge, neither swerving towards an Enthusiastic Contempt of all Order and Decency on the one Hand, nor towards a lukewarm Indifference to every Thing that is sacred*

cred on the other; but that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians, may hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life.

The Author being at a diſtance from the Preſs, requeſts the Indulgence of the Reader, with reſpect to the following Errata, which he is deſired to correct, before his Peruſal of the Treatiſe.

P. 12.	l. 18.	After the word *Chriſt* inſert a comma.
17.	l. 9.	Inſtead of the word *Subjects* read *ſubject.*
21.	l. 12.	After the word *as* inſert *leſs.*
	l. 21.	Inſtead of the word *in* read *to.*
27.	l. 16.	Inſtead of the word *Plentitude* read *Plenitude.*
32.	l. 8.	After the word *Judgment* inſert the word *Sixthly.*
	l. 22.	Inſtead of the word *has* read *haſt.*
42.	l. 5.	After the word *offend* inſert *them.*
43.	laſt line.	In the word *Nicholaitans* blot out the *h.*

ERRATUM.

In Page 32, Line 8, after the Word *Judgment*, the Reader is deſired to inſert the Word *Sixthly.*

ON THE

CHURCH.

AS the Holy Scriptures are the Rule of our Faith and Practice, it is from them we are to learn the Nature and Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, the Form of its Government, the Extent of its Powers, and the Limits of our Obedience.

I. FROM the Account which the Divine Records have given us of the *Chriſtian Church*, it appears to be no confuſed Multitude of Men, independent one on another, but a well-formed and regular Society. This is evident from the Names and Alluſions by which it is deſcribed.

It is called a *Family*, whereof Chriſt is the Maſter, of *whom the whole Family is named (a)*. It is ſaid to be the *City of the living God (b)*; whence Chriſtian People are *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints (c)*. And it is often mentioned as a *Kingdom*, of which *Chriſt* is the *King*. Thus in our *Lord*'s Words, *Thou art* Peter, and upon *this Rock I will build my Church, and I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (d)*; where the *Church* and the *Kingdom of Heaven* mean the ſame Thing. As a *Family*, a *City*, and a *Kingdom*, are Societies, and the Chriſtian Church is repreſented by them, that muſt likewiſe be a Society.

Some of the chief Characters and Properties of this Society, as deſcribed in Holy Scripture, are,

Firſt, That it is not a meer *voluntary* Society; but one whereof Men are obliged to be Members, as they value their everlaſting Happineſs; for it is a Society ap-

(a) Epheſ. iii. 14. 15. *(b)* Heb. xii. 22 *(c)* Epheſ. ii. 19. *(d)* Math. xvi. 18. 19.

pointed

pointed by God with Enforcements of Rewards and Puniſhments. That it is of God's Appointment is certain; for it is *the Church of the living God (e)*. That it is enforced with Rewards and Puniſhments is not leſs certain: For Remiſſion of Sins, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and eternal Life, are declared to be the Privileges of the Chriſtian Church, and annexed to Baptiſm, the conſtant Rite of Initiation into the Church; *Repent and be baptized in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt for the Remiſſion of Sins*, and *ye ſhall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt (f)*. And the Conſequence of neglecting to hear Chriſt and his Apoſtles may be underſtood from *Math.* x. 15. *Whoever ſhall not receive you nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that Houſe or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet. Verily, I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for that City*. Now as God by inſtituting this Society, and annexing ſuch Rewards and Puniſhments, has ſufficiently declared his Will, that Men

(e) 1 Tim. iii. 15. (f) Acts ii. 38.

ſhould enter into it, all Men are obliged to become Members of it; and it can in no other Senſe be called a voluntary Society, than as it is left to every Man's Choice, whether he will be for ever happy or miſerable.

Secondly, The *Chriſtian* Church is a *Spiritual* Society. It was founded in *Oppoſition* to the *Kingdom* of *Darkneſs*. This is plainly implied in our bleſſed *Saviour*'s Words to *St. Peter*: *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it (g)*. Whence the Members of the *Chriſtian* Church are ſaid to be *delivered out of the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated into the Kingdom of Chriſt (h)*. And the *Chriſtian* People, as *Soldiers* under *Chriſt* are ſaid to *fight, not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places (i)*. Their *Armour* is not ſuch as will guard them againſt *carnal*, but *ſpiritual Enemies*;

(g) Math. xvi. 18. (h) Col. i. 13. (i) Col. ii. 14. 15.

it

it is the Armour of Light *(k)*, *the Armour of God, the Girdle of Truth, the Breaſt-Plate of Righteouſneſs, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, the Sword of the Spirit (l)*. And this *Spiritual* Society or *Kingdom of Chriſt* was by the Deſign of its Great Founder to be diſtinct from all *earthly Kingdoms*. *My Kingdom*, ſays Chriſt, *is not of this World (m)*: For as *earthly Kingdoms* are deſigned for Men's *temporal* Welfare, ſo the End of this *heavenly Kingdom* is to promote our *everlaſting* Happineſs.

Thirdly, It is an *outward* and *viſible* Society. The Name of Church is conſtantly applied in the Scriptures to ſuch a Society. Thus we find it uſed by our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf: *Tell it to the Church. If he neglect to hear the Church (n)*. It is compared to a *Marriage Feaſt*, to a *Sheepfold*, to a *Net full of Fiſhes*, to a *Field of Corn*, &c. by which Alluſions the Society of *Chriſtians*, which is the Notion implied in the Name of *Church*, is evi-

(k) Rom. xiii. 12. *(l)* Epheſ. vi. 13. *(m)* John xviii. 36. *(n)* Math. xviii. 9.

dently

dently deſcribed, as a *viſible* Body of Men, taken out of and ſeparated from the reſt of the World. Publick *Rulers* were appointed to govern the Church, the *Faith* was to be publickly confeſſed, the publick *Worſhip* of God to be frequented, and *viſible* Sacraments to be received by all the Members of it; and conſequently the *Chriſtian* Church is an *outward* and *viſible* Society.

Fourthly, It is an *univerſal* Society, both with regard to *Place* and with regard to *Time*. With regard to *Place*; for Chriſt's Commiſſion to his Apoſtles was *to preach the Goſpel to every Creature (o), and to teach and baptize all Nations (p)*; and with regard to *Time*; for it is propheſied concerning Chriſt's Kingdom, that it ſhall *be eſtabliſhed for ever, as the Sun and Moon throughout all Generations (q)*; and we are told by *St. Paul*, that *Chriſt muſt reign, 'till all his Enemies, the laſt* of which is *Death*, ſhall be *put under his Feet (r)*, which cannot be 'till the general Reſur-

(o) Mark xvi. 15. (p) Mat. xxviii. 19. (q) Pſa. lxxii. 5. (r) 1 Cor. xv. 25. 26.

rection;

rection; and he himſelf has promiſed to be *with* his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors *always, even unto the End of the World (ſ)*.

II. Now ſince no well-regulated Society ever did or can ſubſiſt without *Officers* to govern it, and without ſome Subordination among theſe, and ſince it appears that the Chriſtian Church is a regular Society, it muſt of Neceſſity have its *Officers*. And as this Society is to be continued by a Succeſſion of Believers to the World's End, it follows, that there muſt be an uninterrupted Succeſſion of *Officers* 'till that Time. And as it is a Society of God's Inſtitution, the *Officers* of it muſt receive their Commiſſion from *Him*.

Firſt, That there are *Officers* in the *Chriſtian* Church does not admit of Doubt: Our bleſſed Lord, the Head and Founder of it, when on Earth, *choſe Twelve that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach, whom he named Apoſtles (t), and gave them Power and*

(ſ) Math. xxvii. 20. (t) Luke vi. 12, 13.

Au-

Authority over Devils, and to cure all Manner of Diſeaſes (u); and beſides theſe, he appointed *other Seventy (v)*. After his Reſurrection, when he declared, *All Power was given unto him in Heaven and in Earth*, he commiſſioned his Apoſtles *to teach and baptize all Nations (w)*, and inveſted them with the ſame Authority which he had received from his Father; *AS my Father hath ſent me, EVEN SO ſend I you (x)*: As he had received Authority to ſend them, ſo he gave them Authority to ſend others; and accordingly, when they were farther *endued with Power from on High (y)*, by the Deſcent of the *Holy Spirit*, whom Chriſt promiſed to ſend, we read, that they *ordained the Seven Deacons (z)*, that *Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every Church (a)*, and *Paul ordained Timothy*: So that from the Beginning, there were three diſtinct Orders of Miniſters in the Church, namely, that of *Deacons*, another of *Preſbyters*, and over them a ſuperior Order, in which were not only the *Apoſtles*,

(u) Luke ix. 1. (v) Luke x. 1. (w) Mat. xxviii. 19. (x) John xx. 21. (y) Mat. xxviii. 19. 20. (z) Acts vi. (a) Acts xiv. 23.

but

but alſo *Timothy and Titus*, who governed the Churches in which they reſided.

Secondly, And that there is a Subordination among the Officers of this Society is evident from Scripture. For the Commiſſion of the *Seventy* was more limited and reſtrained than that of the *Twelve*. And as the *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* were Subjects to *Chriſt*, ſo were the *Elders* and *Deacons* to the *Apoſtles*. *St. Paul* ſends to *Miletus*, and calls thither the *Elders* of *Epheſus*, to whom he gives a moſt ſolemn Charge; which is a manifeſt Sign, that they were under his Government *(b)*. And at *Corinth*, where ſeveral Prophets and Evangeliſts were then preſent, the ſame Apoſtle, being abſent, both excommunicates, and abſolves, and enacts Laws. *Let the Prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the Reſt judge (c). If any Man think himſelf to be a Prophet or Spiritual, let him acknowledge* that *the Things which I write unto you are the Commandments of the Lord (d)*. And in like Manner, *Timothy*,

(b) Acts xx. 17, &c. *(c)* 1 Cor. xiv. 29. *(d)* 1 Cor. xiv. 36. 37.

by Virtue of the Authority conferred on him by the Impoſition of *St. Paul*'s Hands, ruled the whole Church of *Epheſus*, *Officers* as well as private Chriſtians. Whence it is manifeſt, that as the Chriſtian Church was governed by the three Orders of *Apoſtles* or *Biſhops*, *Prieſts* and *Deacons*, ſo the ſupreme Authority was lodged in the ſuperior Order of the *Apoſtles* or *Biſhops*, from whom the *Prieſts* and *Deacons* derived their Power, and without whoſe Conſent they could not lawfully perform any religious Act.

Thirdly, That there will be an uninterrupted Succeſſion of theſe *Officers* in the Church to the World's End, may be inferred from the Nature of their Functions. Their conſtant *Office* is to preſcribe Rules for maintaining the outward Peace and Order of the Church—to preach the Goſpel—to admit Members into the Church by Baptiſm *(e)*—to take Care that there be no Schiſm in the Body (*f*)—to adminiſter the Euchariſt (*g*)—to oppoſe Here-

(*e*) Acts ii. 38. 39. (*f*) 1 Cor. xii. 4. 12. 18. 24. 28. (*g*) 1 Cor. xi. 23. 26.

ſies

ſies (*h*); and therefore their Continuance is as neceſſary as their firſt Inſtitution; ſo long as the Church ſhall laſt: And as that will be to the End of the World, there muſt be a conſtant Succeſſion of Officers 'till the ſame Time. And that it will be ſo, we have the Aſſurance of our Lord's Promiſe to his Apoſtles juſt before his Aſcenſion, *Lo! I am with you always, even to the End of the World* (*i*): The Meaning of which Promiſe muſt be, that they ſhould always be ſucceeded by others in the ſame *Office*; For as the Apoſtles all died within the Compaſs of fourſcore Years after this extenſive Promiſe was made, it could no other Way be fulfilled, but by our Lord's *being with* their Succeſſors in the Goſpel *Miniſtry* 'till the *World's End*.

Fourthly, That the *Officers* of this Society muſt receive their Commiſſion from God is manifeſt from *Hebrews* v. 4. *No Man taketh this Honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.* Now beſides the plain Meaning of the

(*h*) 2 Tim. ii. 2. (*i*) Mat. xxviii. 20.

Words, which ſhews, that he who officiates in Divine Matters is to be ſet apart, and to have a diſtinct Commiſſion from the reſt of Mankind, and that this Commiſſion muſt be derived from Divine Inſtitution, the Neceſſity of ſuch a Divine Commiſſion to qualify a Perſon for any ſacred Office may be proved by three invincible Arguments.

Firſt, From the Dignity of the Office it is called an *Honour*. The Miniſters of Religion are the Repreſentatives of God Almighty; they are *the Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, the *Diſpenſers* of his Holy Word and Sacraments, the *Meſſengers and Embaſſadors* of Heaven. Theſe Characters aſcribed to them in Holy Scripture ſufficiently demonſtrate the Dignity of their Function, and are a plain Argument that *None but God himſelf* can give them their Commiſſion.

Secondly, From the conſtant Practice among the Jews; the Apoſtle makes the Calling of *Aaron* the Pattern of all other Miniſters in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church

Church. *Aaron* and his Sons, and the Levites were conſecrated by the expreſs command of God to *Moſes*, and they had all of them their *diſtinct Commiſſion* from Heaven, and no leſs than *Death* was the Penalty of invading their Office *(k)*. What *Aaron* and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, ſuch are the Biſhops, Preſbyters, and Deacons, in the Chriſtian Church.

Theſe are appointed by God as *thoſe* were, and therefore it can be no Sacrilege to uſurp their Office.

Thirdly, From the Example of our Saviour, who (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt, but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, To-day have I begotten thee (l)*. Tho' our Saviour wanted no Gift to qualify him for this Office, as having the *Divine Nature* inſeparably united in his *human*, yet he would not enter upon his Office, 'till he was externally commiſſioned thereunto by

(k) Numb. iii. 10. *(l)* Heb. v. 5.

the

the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, and an *audible Voice* from Heaven, proclaiming him to be the Messiah. From all which it is evident, that no one ought to exercise the Office of a Minister in the Church of God without a Divine Commission; and that as the Officers of the Christian Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were appointed by God, this, like every other Divine Institution, must remain in the same State 'till it shall please God to change or wholly lay it aside; for Men may with the same Reason abolish the Sacraments of the Church, and all other Christian Institutions, as pretend that the Functions of Church Officers are mutable and temporary.

III. As no Society can subsist without *Officers*, so neither can it without *Power* to do all Things which are necessary to its own Preservation, and good Government; and as it appears that the Church is a Society instituted by God, and designed to last to the World's End, there can be no Doubt, but that he has invested it with all the Powers, which the Nature of such a Society requires. *First*,

First, As the Church is a ſpiritual Society, all the *Powers* which belong to it are of the ſame Nature, and ſuch as wholly relate to the next World; conſequently, they are diſtinct from thoſe of *civil* Magiſtrates, which concern the Affairs of this Life, and are deſigned for the preſent Welfare of human Societies. Our Lord himſelf wholly diſclaimed all civil Power, and left the civil Rights of Mankind in the ſame State wherein he found them. And when the *Apoſtle* exhorts the *Hebrews* to yield Obedience to their *Paſtors*, he reſtrains it to the Affairs of their *Souls*, for which their *Paſtors* were accountable to God: *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an Account (m).*

Secondly, As God has appointed *Officers* to govern his Church, the Powers which he has committed to the Church for its good Government muſt ordinarily be executed by them. For every *Office* implies

(m) Heb. xiii. 17.

Power,

Power, and to ſay that the *Officers* of the Church have no *Power* but what all private *Chriſtians* may lawfully exerciſe, is juſt the ſame as to ſay, there are no ſuch *Officers* at all. And as there are diſtinct *Offices*, ſo there muſt be diſtinct *Powers* appropriated to every one of them; for as the Notion of an *Office* implies *Power*, ſo diſtinct *Offices* do neceſſarily imply diſtinct *Powers*: And therefore, tho' the Scriptures had been ſilent in this Matter, it might ſafely have been concluded, from the different Kinds of *Officers* whom *Chriſt* hath intruſted with the Care and Government of his Church, not only that private *Chriſtians* are excluded from the *ordinary* Execution of any Eccleſiaſtical *Power*; but that ſome Powers are appropriated in ſuch a Manner to the chief *Officers*, that they cannot lawfully be exerciſed by thoſe of lower *Orders*. The *Officers* of the Church are called God's *Stewards*, who are entruſted with the Care and Government of his *Houſhold*, that is, his Church; and whoſe Buſineſs and Duty it is to diſpenſe their conſtant *Food*, *i. e.* the *Word* and *Sacraments* to all the Members

Members of it; whence it is plain that private *Chriſtians* have no Power to diſpenſe the *Ordinances* of the Goſpel to others, but muſt themſelves expect them from the Hands of *God's Miniſters*. And the Names of Apoſtles and Angels, whereby the *Officers* of the Church were diſtinguiſhed from other *Chriſtians* in the *Apoſtolic* Age, manifeſtly imply, that they acted by a Commiſſion from God, to which the reſt had no Title. And however great the Gifts and Abilities of private Chriſtians might be, none had Power to exerciſe any Function or Office in the Church, who had not been firſt approved and *commiſſioned* by thoſe whom God had inveſted with Authority, to that End; for thro' the whole New Teſtament the Gifts or Abilities of Church-Officers are every where diſtinguiſhed from their *Commiſſion*, and *deſcribed* as previous Qualifications to it.

Thirdly, What theſe Powers of the Church are, and to whom each of them belongs in *particular*, the Scripture will inform us. They may be reduced under

the following Heads, *viz.* The *Power* 1. of *Preaching*. 2. Of *Prayer*. 3. Of *Baptiſm*. 4. Of *celebrating the Lord's Supper*. 5. Of *confirming* Perſons *baptized*. 6. Of *ordaining* Miniſters. 7. Of making *Canons*. 8. Of *Juriſdiction*. 9. Of demanding *Maintenance*.

Firſt, The firſt of theſe *Powers* is that of *preaching* the Goſpel, which naturally precedes all the reſt, becauſe it is the Means which God has been pleaſed to appoint for converting Men to the *Chriſtian* Faith, in order to bring them into his Church, wherein the other *Powers* are exerciſed. None have a Right to preach without a *Commiſſion*; *for how ſhall they preach except they be ſent (n)?* Our *Lord* himſelf was *ſent* and commiſſioned by the Father *to preach the Goſpel (o)*, and this was one of the Functions to which he was *anointed* by the *Holy Spirit*. In like Manner he ſolemnly *called* and *ſet apart* his *Apoſtles* to this *Office* (*p*), and gave them *Commiſſion to teach all Nations* (*q*).

(*n*) Rom. x. 14. 15. (*o*) Luke iv. 18. (*p*) Mark iii. 14. vi. 7. (*q*) Mat. xxviii. 19.

And

And this Branch of the Apoſtolic Office, viz. *Preaching* the Goſpel, was derived to their Succeſſors the *Biſhops*. Hence *St. Paul* charges *Timothy to preach the Word* (*r*), and one previous Qualification required of ſuch as were to be ordained *Biſhops*, is, *that they be apt to teach* (*ſ*); but this *Power* was not confined to the *Biſhops* or ſuperior *Order* of Miniſters in the Church, for the Apoſtle calls the *Preſbyters* his *Fellow-labourers*, that is, his *Aſſociates* in *preaching* the Goſpel; and *Philip*, who was only a *Deacon*, *preached* the Word *in Samaria*. All the different *Orders* exerciſed this *Function*; the *Biſhops* as inveſted with the Plentitude of Power, the *Prieſts* and *Deacons* by an Authority derived from them.

Secondly, Another religious Act, which has always been appropriated to the *Clergy*, is offering to God the Prayers of the Church. In Secret every man is his own Orator; and in private Families, Performance of Divine Worſhip is incumbent on them, to whom the Care and Govern-

(*r*) 1. Tim. iv. 1. 2. (*ſ*) 1. Tim. iii. 2.

ment of the Family belong; but in the public Congregations of *Chriſtians*, Divine Worſhip muſt be celebrated only by thoſe, to whom it has pleaſed God to *commit* this Office. The preſenting of the People's *Prayers* to God, and interceding with him to *bleſs* them, has always been reckoned an eſſential Part of the *Sacerdotal* Office. The Apoſtles join the Offices of *Preaching* and *Prayer* together: *We*, ſay they, *will give ourſelves continually to Prayer and to the Miniſtry of the Word* (*t*). *St. James* directs ſick Perſons to ſend for the *Preſbyters* of the Church to *pray* and *intercede* for them (*u*), that their Sins may be forgiven. And the *Twenty-four Elders* in the *Revelation*, who repreſent the *Miniſters* of the *Chriſtian* Church, *have every one of them golden Vials full of Incenſe*, which is the Prayers of the Saints (*v*).

Thirdly, The next *Power* is that of admitting Members into the Church by *Baptiſm*. This is expreſſed in the Commiſſion, which our *Lord* gave to his *Apoſ-*

(*t*) Acts vi. 4. (*u*) James v. 14. (*v*) Rev. v. 8.

tles

tles juſt before his Aſcenſion: *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them* (*w*). Yet was it never underſtood to be ſo ſtrictly appropriated to them, but that it might lawfully be exerciſed by inferior *Miniſters*. For we find that *Philip* the *Deacon* baptized the *Samaritans* and the *Ethiopian Eunuch* (*x*). Hence tho' the Power of *Baptiſm* belongs chiefly and primarily to the *Biſhops*, yet it belongs alſo to *Preſbyters*, who are the Biſhop's Aſſiſtants in the Care and Government of the Church; and may lawfully be committed to *Deacons*; but neither *Preſbyters* nor *Deacons* ought to baptize without the Biſhop's Allowance.

Fourthly, Another Power which our Lord has left to his Church is that of conſecrating the *Euchariſt*, or *Lord's* Supper. The firſt *Euchariſt* was conſecrated by our *Lord* himſelf a little before his Paſſion. At the ſame Time he gave his *Apoſtles* Commiſſion to *do*, as he had done; *Do this*, ſaid he, *in Remembrance of me* (*y*). Yet this

(*w*) Mat. xxviii. 19. (*x*) Acts 9. (*y*) Luke xxii. 19.

Office

Office was not ſo ſtrictly appropriated to the *Apoſtles*, but that it might be lawfully executed by the Minſters of the ſecond *Order*; whence we find that the *Euchariſt* was conſecrated in the Church of *Corinth*, when no Miniſter above the Order of *Preſbyters*, who were next below the Apoſtles, was there. The Reaſon why *Deacons* were not allowed to conſecrate the *Lord's Supper* was, becauſe this Sacrament was always believed to ſucceed in the Place of *Sacrifices*; and as none beſide the *High Prieſt*, and inferior Prieſts, were permitted to offer Sacrifices under the *Jewiſh Law*, ſo none but *Biſhops* and *Preſbyters*, who alone are *Prieſts* in the *Chriſtian* Senſe of that Name, conſecrated the *Lord's Supper*.

Fifthly, A farther *Power* which belongs to the Church is that of impoſing Hands on Perſons baptized, commonly called *Confirmation*. The Scripture gives us the following Account of the Exerciſe of this Power: When *Philip*, the *Deacon* and *Evangeliſt*, had converted and baptized the Samaritans, *the Apoſtles which were at* Jeru-

Jeruſalem *ſent unto them* Peter *and* John; *who having prayed and laid their Hands on them, they received the Holy Ghoſt, who before was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus (z).* When the twelve Diſciples at *Epheſus* had been baptized by *Timothy* or ſome other of *St. Paul's* Aſſiſtants, *Paul laid his Hands on them, and the Holy Ghoſt came upon them (a).* From which Paſſages theſe two Things appear: *Firſt*, That the End and Deſign of this *Office* was to confer the *Gifts* of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon Perſons lately baptized. *Secondly*, That it was ſo ſtrictly appropriated to the *Apoſtles*, that it could not ordinarily be performed even by inſpired Men and Workers of Miracles, who were of an inferior *Order*. And that it was not a temporary Inſtitution, but one which was *fundamental* to *Chriſtianity*, and conſequently laſting and perpetual, is plain from its being called a *Principle* and Foundation; and joined with ſome of the moſt eſſential Duties and Articles of the *Chriſ-*

(z) Acts viii. 14. 17. (a) Acts xix. 6.

tian

tian Religion. *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptiſm, and of laying on of Hands; and of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment.* Another Power mentioned as belonging to the Church is that of *ordaining Miniſters.* It having been ſhewn that there muſt always be *Miniſters* of different *Orders* in the Church; and that no Man can *ordinarily* exerciſe any Eccleſiaſtical *Office*, or Function, who is not lawfully called to it; the next Enquiry is, from whom this *Call* or *Commiſſion* muſt be expected?

Now the original of this Commiſſion is from God the Father, by whom our Lord was ſent into the World to mediate between God and Man, as he himſelf witneſſeth. *As thou has ſent me into the World*, ſaith he to the Father, *even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the World (b)*; and to his Apoſtles, *as my Father ſent me, even ſo*

(b) John xvii. 18.

ſend

ſend I you (c). So that the whole Power of erecting the *Chriſtian* Church, and of governing it ſince it was erected, is derived from the *Father*.

But then the Perſon by whom this Power is immediately conferred is the *Holy Spirit*, the third Perſon in the bleſſed and undivided Trinity. He it was, by whoſe anointing our *Lord* was inveſted with his mediatorial Office. Whence he is ſaid to have *preached by the Spirit (d)*; *thro' the Holy Spirit he gave Commandments to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen (e)*. *By the Spirit of God he caſt out Devils*. *Thro' the eternal Spirit he offered himſelf to God (f)*, and the Authority and ſpecial Grace, whereby the *Apoſtles* and all *Church-Officers* execute their reſpective Functions, are in the ſame Manner aſcribed to the Spirit. This was expreſſed in the very Form of the Apoſtles' Ordination, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt: Whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted*; and *whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, they are re-*

(c) John xx. 21. (d) Luke iv. 18. (e) Acts i. 2. (f) Heb. ix. 14.

tained (g): Where the Authority to remit and retain Sins is made a Conſequence of their receiving the Holy Ghoſt. And *St. Paul* aſcribes to the ſame Spirit both the Offices of the Apoſtles and other Miniſters, and their Abilities to diſcharge thoſe Offices *(h)*. So that all Eccleſiaſtical Authority is the Gift of the Holy Spirit. But the Queſtion is, What Perſons God has intruſted with Authority to *ordain* Miniſters in the Church?

And if we may be allowed to reaſon from the Conſtitution and univerſal Practice of civil Societies, we muſt conclude, that the Power of *ordaining* Miniſters belongs to the *Biſhops*, who are the chief Governors of the Church, becauſe the Power of conſtituting ſubordinate Magiſtrates belongs to the ſupreme Governors of all civil Societies: And it is contradictory to Reaſon, that they who exerciſe any Authority, whether in the Church or in the State, ſhould derive

(g) John xxii. 22. 23. Epheſ. iv. 7. 8. 11.

(h) 1. Cor. xii. 1. 31.

their

their Authority from any, but thoſe in whom the ſupreme Authority is lodged.

ACCORDINGLY we find in the Goſpel, that, whilſt our *Lord* lived on Earth, he reſerved the Power of *ordaining* Miniſters to himſelf. He gave the *Apoſtles* and the *Seventy Diſciples* a Commiſſion to preach, but never allowed them, while he continued among them, to communicate that Commiſſion to any other. Afterwards, when the Apoſtles were the chief viſible Governors of the Church, they ordained *Miniſters*. All the *Apoſtles* together ordained the Seven *Deacons* in the Church of *Jeruſalem (i)*. *Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every Church* which they viſited *(k)*. In the ſame Age, this Authority was exerciſed by others whom the Apoſtles had *ordained* to be chief Governors of Churches. *Timothy* and *Titus ordained* Miniſters in their reſpective Dioceſes of *Epheſus* and *Crete*: But that no inferior *Order* had this Power is evident. *St. Paul* tells *Titus*, that *for this Cauſe* he

(i) Acts vi. 3. 16. *(k)* Acts xiv 23.

left

left him in *Crete* that he might *ordain Elders in every City (l)*. But this could be no Cauſe of leaving him there, if the *Preſbyters* or *Elders* had the Power of Ordination lodged in them: For that Iſland had been converted to Chriſtianity long before this Epiſtle was written, and before *Titus* came thither: And no doubt there were *many Preſbyters* among them. The ſame may be ſaid of *Timothy*'s being ſent to *Epheſus*. To what Purpoſe was he ſent thither, if the *Preſbyters* there before had Power to ordain? So that it appears from Scripture, and from the Nature of the Epiſcopal Office, that none but Biſhops have Authority to *ordain* Miniſters in the Church; and conſequently none but thoſe who are ordained by them, can be truly ſaid to have a *Divine Commiſſion*, or *any Authority* to *miniſter* in the *Chriſtian Church*.

Seventhly, The next Power to be mentioned, which the Church exerciſed in the primitive Ages, was that of making

(l) Titus i. 5. 9.

Canons,

Canons, or Laws for the Behaviour of its Members in *Spiritual* Affairs. Whereby it is not meant, that the Church has Authority to change any of the Divine Laws, or impoſe any Article of Faith, or Rule of Moral Duty, or to preſcribe any Condition of Salvation, which is neither expreſsly contained in the Scriptures, nor can certainly be concluded from them; but only that ſhe is inveſted with Power in all ſuch Things as relate to the outward Peace and Order of the Church. And if it appears that Things of this Kind are left undetermined by the Scriptures, and alſo that it is neceſſary they ſhould be determined, then we cannot doubt but that Chriſt has entruſted the Church with Authority to determine them. Now that theſe are not particularly determined by Scripture is very evident. For the Rules of Scripture are all general. We are commanded to *aſſemble* together to worſhip God, but the Times and Places are not expreſſed. We are commanded *to follow ſuch Things as make for Peace and Edification*, and *to do all Things decently and in Order*; but the particular Methods whereby Order muſt

be

be maintained, and Edification promoted are no where ſet down. *Timothy*, and all other Biſhops with him, are commanded *to lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man*, but the previous Trials of ſuch as are Candidates for Holy Orders, and the Time and Methods of Examination into their Abilities and Behaviour, are left undetermined. But it is neceſſary that theſe Things ſhould be determined; for otherwiſe nothing but Diſorder and Confuſion would be ſeen in the Church, and therefore Chriſt has certainly left the Governors of his Church Authority to determine them. And accordingly if we enquire into the Practice of the Apoſtles, and other primitive Governors of the Church, we ſhall find, that, beſides the ſtanding Rules of the Goſpel, they eſtabliſhed many Regulations, as the ſeveral Occaſions of the Churches under their Care required. In many of *St. Paul*'s Epiſtles, eſpecially in thoſe to the *Corinthians*, he preſcribes particular Rules for the Decency of Divine Worſhip, the avoiding of Scandal, and other Things which were not determined by *Chriſt*; and he ſpeaks of Cuſtoms which he himſelf

and

and other Apoſtles eſtabliſhed and the Churches obſerved *(m)*. There is and ever will be the ſame Neceſſity of preſcribing Rules for the Peace and good Government of the Church, and the Order and Decency of Divine Service, that there was in the *Apoſtolic* Age; and conſequently there is the ſame Reaſon why this Authority ſhould be tranſmitted to the Biſhops in all Ages, as any other Part of the *Apoſtolical* Office.

Eighthly, From the *Power* of making *Laws* we proceed to that of *Juriſdiction*, or executing the Laws; that is, the Power of *judging* and *cenſuring* Offenders. That our Bleſſed Lord has entruſted the *Church*, and particularly the *Governors* of it, with Authority to *cenſure* Offenders, and to *exclude* them from its *Communion* will appear, if we conſider the Church, 1ſt, as a *Society*; for this Authority is exerciſed by all Societies whatever. And as in *civil* Societies, this Authority is neceſſary for ſecuring Men's Lives and Properties, which

(m) 1 Cor. xi. 16.

is

is the chief End for which it pleaſed God to inſtitute theſe Societies; ſo in the Church or *Spiritual* Society, the ſame Authority is equally neceſſary to attain the Ends for which the Church was founded; namely, to maintain the Purity of Divine Worſhip, to ſecure Men from the Pollutions of the World, and train them up in Virtue and Piety now, in order to make them happy for ever; all which cannot be effected, if the Church has not Power to exclude from its Communion ſuch unworthy Members as endeavour to oppoſe theſe Ends by promoting Vice, Superſtition, and Infidelity.

Secondly, As a Society, the Privileges whereof are conditional; for none muſt be admitted into the Church by Baptiſm, who do not, by themſelves or their Sureties, profeſs the Faith, and vow Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt; and if theſe Conditions are neceſſary for Men's Admiſſion into the Church, they muſt be ſo for their Continuance in it. For no Reaſon can be ſhewn why Men ſhould be obliged to vow Faith and Obedience in order to their becoming

coming Members of the Church, which does not equally hold for their *Exclusion* from it when they notoriously break that Vow: So that the Power of *Excommunication* is a manifest Consequence of the *Baptismal* Covenant, and committed to the Governors of the Church, who have the Dispensation of the Sacraments.

Thirdly. As it has received this Power from our *Lord*'s Institution. Upon *Peter*'s confessing our *Lord* to be the *Son of God*, he declared first, that upon *this Rock* he would *build* his *Church*, *against* which *the Gates of Hell* should never *prevail*; and then added, *I will give unto thee*, (that is, to *Peter*; and with him to the rest of the Apostles) *the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven (a)*; the Meaning of which Promise is manifestly this, that the Apostles and their Successors should be chief Governors of the Church under Christ, and as such should have Authority to admit and exclude, to condemn or absolve, whom they judged convenient, which

(a) Math. xvi. 19.

is certain from another Paſſage, where our Lord having cautioned his Diſciples that they ſhould not offend others, proceeds to inſtruct them how to behave themſelves when others ſhould offend. That firſt they ſhould privately *admoniſh* the Offender; if this did not bring him to Repentance they ſhould then reprove him *before two or three Witneſſes*; but if this alſo proved unſucceſsful, their laſt Remedy ſhould be to *tell it to the Church*; and if the Offender ſtill neglected to hear, as their Authority was wholly *ſpiritual*, and they could not inflict any *civil* Puniſhment on him, all that our Lord directs them to do is, that they ſhould account the obſtinate Offender as *an Heathen or a Publican (o)*, they ſhould look on him no longer as a *Member* of the Church, but place him among *Infidels*, and other *profligate* Men, whoſe Converſation they uſed to ſhun.

THAT this Authority was exerciſed and held to be of divine Right by the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors the Biſhops of the primitive Church, is clear; from the Caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, when it pleaſed

(o) Math. xviii. 15. 16. 17.

God

God to atteſt the *Apoſtolic* Authority of *retaining Sins* by enabling *Peter* to ſtrike both the Offenders with preſent Death *(p)*: And from the Caſe of the *inceſtuous Corinthian (q)*, whom *St. Paul delivered to Satan*, excluded from the Church of Chriſt, for the Crime of Inceſt, and afterwards received again to *Communion* upon Repentance. And this Power was not confined to the Apoſtles, but was to be continued to their Succeſſors; we find it was committed to *Timothy* and *Titus*, whom *St. Paul* ſet over the Churches of *Epheſus* and *Crete*. For he writes thus to *Timothy*: *Againſt an Elder receive not an Accuſation, but before two or three Witneſſes (r)*; and if he had Power to *receive Accuſations* and *hear Witneſſes*, he muſt have Authority to paſs ſome *Cenſure* upon them, if they were found guilty. And the ſame *Apoſtle* writes thus to *Titus*: *A Man that is an Heretick after the firſt and ſecond Admonition reject (ſ)*. The like Power had the *Angels* of the ſeven Churches in the Revelation. For the *Biſhop* of *Pergamus* was ſeverely reproved for having the *Nicholaitans* in his Communion *(t)*, and

(p) Acts v. 12. *(q)* 1 Cor. v. 1. *(r)* 1 Tim. v. 19.
(ſ) Tit. iii. 10. *(t)* Rev. ii. 15. 16.

the *Biſhop* of *Thyatira* for *ſuffering that Woman Jezebel (u)*. Which manifeſtly implies, they had Authority to *exclude* them from the Church, for otherwiſe they could not have been blamed for permitting them to remain in it.

Ninthly. Laſtly, another Right of the *Clergy*, is that of demanding a competent Maintenance from the People committed to their Charge. It is certain that God has an abſolute Right to diſpoſe of all we have in the World; and ſince it has appeared, that he has appointed an *Order* of Men, to attend continually on his Worſhip and Service, we cannot doubt but that he requires ſo much of our worldly Subſtance to be ſet apart for their Support, as may enable them to diſcharge the Duties of their Function, and ſuch as may expreſs the juſt Reſpect which is borne to their Office and Character. Our *Lord* himſelf with his Retinue of *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* was maintained by charitable Contributions; for we read that *many miniſtred unto him of their Subſtance (v)*, When he ſent forth his *Apoſtles* to preach, he gave them this Inſtruction, *Provide nei-*

(u) Rev. ii. 20. (v) Luke viii. 2. 3.

ther

ther Gold, nor Silver, nor Braſs, in your Purſes, for the Workman is worthy of his Meat (w). Whence it is manifeſt, that our *Lord* accounted it the Duty of thoſe, to whom the Goſpel was preached, to give a *competent* Maintenance to them that preached it. When the Apoſtle *St. Paul* puts the *Theſſalonians* in Mind that he had maintained himſelf, he at the ſame time aſſerts his Right to require *Maintenance* of them: *Not* (ſays he) *becauſe we have not Power (x).* And to the *Corinthians* he ſays, *That as they who wait at the Altar are Partakers with the Altar, even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel (y).* Where it is plain that the Miniſters of the Goſpel have Authority to require a competent Maintenance from the People committed to their Care; and as the Privileges of the *Goſpel* certainly are not leſs than thoſe of the *Law*, and the *Apoſtle* has inferred that the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to *live of the Goſpel*, becauſe the *Jewiſh Prieſts lived of the Altar*, we may reaſonably conclude, that their *Maintenance* muſt not be leſs in Proportion, than that which the Jewiſh Prieſts enjoyed.

(w) Math. x. 9. 10. (x) 2 Theſ. iii. 8. (y) 1 Cor. ix. 6.

IV. As

IV. As it appears that the Church is a *compleat* Society, wherein ſome govern and others are governed, the next Thing to be determined is, What Obedience is due from the private Members of this Society to their Governors? That all Lay-Chriſtians do owe ſome Obedience to their Spiritual Rulers is evident from our Lord's Command to *hear the Church (z)*, and the Injunction of the Apoſtle, *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an Account* (*a*). The Church which we are *to hear* is to be known from the foregoing Deſcription of it, and the Rulers to whom we are to yield *Obedience*, and *ſubmit* ourſelves, are they who derive their Commiſſion by an uninterrupted Succeſſion from *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. Wherein this Obedience to our Rulers conſiſts, and what are the Limits of it, we may learn from the Nature and Extent of their Power; for ſo far as they have a Right to command, ſo far are we bound to obey. Now all Things that are in the World may be divided into *Good*, *Bad*, and *Indifferent*. The *Good* oblige by their

(*z*) Math. xviii. 17. (*a*) Heb. xiii. 17.

own

own Nature, and the Command of God; in theſe Things the Authority of our Governors is of no Force; for whatever is injoined by the poſitive Command of God, we are bound to do, whether they require it or not. The *Evil* are by the ſame forbidden, and we are obliged not to obey our Governors, if they ſhould command them. So that it is the *Indifferent* only whereto their Authority reaches, and the Things which are *indifferent* in themſelves are *all* thoſe which relate to the outward Peace and Order of the Church; which are not enjoined by the expreſs Word of God, but yet are in no Reſpect contrary to it, in no wiſe forbidden by it. This Authority was exerciſed by the Governors of the Church from the Beginning (as hath been ſhewn) and it undoubtedly belongs to them; for as they are evidently inveſted with ſome ſpiritual Authority, and they can command in nothing at all, if not in *indifferent* Things, in all ſuch Things as are indifferent, they certainly have a Right to command. And as is their Authority, ſuch is to be our Submiſſion. So that the Obedience we owe to our Spiritual Governors, conſiſts in obſerving all their Injunctions,

junctions, that are contained within theſe Bounds of their Commiſſion; in ſubmitting to that Diſcipline, which they ſhall inflict, either to recover us from a State of Folly, or to preſerve us from falling into it; in attending their *public Adminiſtrations* at ſuch *Times* and *Places* as they ſhall appoint, and upon ſuch Occaſions as they ſhall judge proper, to increaſe our Piety and Devotion; and in ſubmitting to ſuch Regulations as they ſhall think conducive towards the *edifying of the Body of Chriſt*. This is our Duty; for Things which are indifferent in their *Nature*, when commanded by lawful *Authority*, are no longer indifferent to us, but become *neceſſary* in their Uſe; and in diſobeying them that have *the Rule over* us, we diſobey God, who has commanded us to be *ſubject for Conſcience' Sake*; and therefore all this we are to do, from a Senſe of that Right which they have to command, intruſted to them by God our Saviour, and of that great Penalty to which we are liable by our Contempt; *for he that deſpiſeth them, deſpiſeth Him that ſent them.*

FINIS.

A

LETTER

TO A

YOUNG GENTLEMAN

AT

OXFORD,

INTENDED FOR

HOLY ORDERS.

CONTAINING

Some SEASONABLE CAUTIONS againſt ERRORS in DOCTRINE.

Take heed that no man deceive you. MATTH xxiv. 4.
If the blind lead the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch.
MATTH. XV. 14.

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A

LETTER

TO A

YOUNG GENTLEMAN, &c.

DEAR SIR,

IT being the deſire of your good father that you ſhould dedicate yourſelf to the church, and your own ſober and ſtudious diſpoſition being ſuch as will enable you, with God's help, to be of ſome ſervice in it; I, who have now no other motive but a deſire of promoting your ſucceſs in the great undertaking which is before you, ſhould be glad to adminiſter ſome little preſervative againſt the religious errors and diſtempers of the preſent time.

I am not ſuſpicious of any evil that ſeems likely to ariſe from your own breaſt; but

every young man, who is not more than mortal, hath great reaſon to be upon his guard againſt ſuch as may be infuſed: and whether it be owing to a perſuaſion, that unrighteous ends cannot be compaſſed without the credit of a multitude, or to a love of miſchief, or to any other baſe principle; it is a well-known and a lamentable fact, that the enemies of truth and virtue ſpare no pains to propagate their own manners, and reduce all things, ſo far as their ſphere extends, to their own level.

Of this ſpecies of depravity ſo many inſtances muſt neceſſarily occur to a perſon in any public ſituation, and eſpecially at your ſtage of life, that I need not trouble myſelf with ſearching for examples. When a young man, who hath been brought up to modeſty and ſobriety, is committed to the fellowſhip of perſons of his own years, ſome of whom have been unhappily left to the ways of nature; what pains are taken to make him a proſelyte to impudence and debauchery; and what zeal, yea what violence is uſed (by his *friends*) to draw him into the practice of immoderate drinking! But who ever ſaw the like zeal and violence applied by ſober men for the recovery of a ſot or a debauchee? though his preſent ſuc-

ceſs in this world, and his hope in the next have depended upon his reformation?

For the ſpreading of *falſhood*, as great activity is uſed, if not much greater, than for the introducing of immorality; and for this plain reaſon, becauſe if a man's *principles* are corrupted and his *mind intoxicated*, the ſame work is done in a more effectual manner. He who ſticks a few thorns into the earth, brings but a temporary curſe upon it; but he that inſerts the root of a bramble into the ſoil will have a ſucceſſion of thorns, to which Time will always be adding ſome new degrees of ſtubborneſs and vigour.

If there were to be all this zeal and activity on one ſide, and on the other nothing but ſupineneſs and indifference, the cauſe of virtue muſt ſoon be loſt. How much my endeavours may contribute to the ſupport of it, I muſt leave you to judge. My attempt is certainly innocent; and I hope it is laudable. A good man will eaſily believe that others, as well as himſelf, may act upon motives of piety and charity: and a bad man, unleſs he is alſo a weak one, will never be brought to think the better of any truth by ſuch profeſſions as I could here make in my own behalf: therefore I

waſte no words upon recommendatories and apologetics, but proceed directly to the buſineſs of this addreſs; in which I ſhall *firſt* premiſe ſome general obſervations on the *power* and *danger* of *Error*. Then I ſhall proceed to give you a brief *hiſtory of the errors and deluſions of earlier times*. After which, I ſhall point out to you the particular *modes of deceit* with which we are moſt liable to be infected in the *preſent age*. In the next place, I ſhall endeavour to expoſe ſome of the principal *artifices* employed by deſigning men for *bringing their errors into repute*. And laſtly, I ſhall lay down a few ſhort rules for the *preſervation of that truth* which hath been committed to our truſt.

I. God, who hath given the lights of heaven to the natural world, hath communicated the light of revelation as his beſt gift to the intellectual. But we live in perpetual danger of loſing this ineſtimable bleſſing, becauſe the degeneracy and corruption of the human mind hath in all ages been oppoſing the darkneſs of error to the ſalutary beams of divine truth; as the earth we inhabit is always ſending up miſts and vapours, to cover the heaven with clouds, and deprive itſelf of the ſun's light.

The

The deſign of God in revealing his will, is to recall us from the ways of darkneſs, and reſtore our nature to that purity and felicity from whence it is departed. This purpoſe he brings to paſs, firſt by rectifying the underſtanding; or, as the Scripture ſpeaks, *renewing* it *in knowledge* (1). The will of man chuſes for itſelf according to the motives and views preſented to it by the underſtanding; and the actions ariſe immediately from the will; whence it follows, that the underſtanding rightly informed will direct the active faculties into their proper channel. But if it be miſinformed the conſequences are too dreadful and too numerous to be fully deſcribed: for as a man who hath no good principles hath no reaſon for being good; ſo he that is poſſeſſed by ſuch as are falſe, will act irrationally unleſs he acts wickedly: and it is as much againſt the order of reaſon and common ſenſe to expect a good life from ſuch a perſon, as it is contrary to the order of nature to *gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles.* The danger we are under of contracting falſe principles will appear from the three following conſiderations:

(1) *Col.* iii. 10.

1. In

1. In the conteſt betwixt truth and error, we are engaged againſt powers far ſuperior to our own. Sometimes indeed the Scripture ſuppoſes our danger to ariſe from the practices of *men* (2) upon us; but we are aſſured on other occaſions they are no more than *miniſters* and inſtruments (3). All the workings of error and deceit which infeſt the Chriſtian church, and obſcure the light of ſaving knowledge, are contrived and propagated by that inviſible ſpirit, who is therefore emphatically ſtyled the *father* (4) of lies; as all the clouds of ſmoke and ſhowers of aſhes ſent into the air from the mouth of a volcano, proceed from fuel kindled underneath the earth, and burning out of human ſight. Deceitful men are the more to be dreaded for being thus aſſiſted. Activity and reſolution may extinguiſh a common fire; but all the efforts of man will be inſufficient to quench a burning mountain; which muſt have its courſe till God ſhall be pleaſed to ſwallow up all leſſer fires in the general conflagration of the laſt day.

2. To this it may be added, that the mind of man receives with difficulty that

(2) *Matth.* xxiv. iv. (3) 2 *Cor.* xi. 14. 1 *Kin.* xxii. 22. 1 *Tim.* iv. i. *Eph.* ii. 2. (4) *John* viii. 44.

truth

truth which is the ſeed of virtue; but is by nature ſuſceptible of the principles of evil, which are rarely offered to the ignorant without being received. He that ſoweth profitable grain muſt wait upon it with all the arts of huſbandry; but bad principles and ill weeds require no cultivation; inſomuch that he who does leaſt is like to have the moſt. When the *enemy*, in the parable, had ſowed his *tares* amongſt the wheat, it is added that he *went his way*; they required none of his attendance; the human heart being a ſoil too well diſpoſed by nature to bring that evil to maturity which is once caſt into it.

3. We may conſider, thirdly, that if any caution was given by Chriſt to his apoſtles in their days, we are bound to regard it in a more particular manner in theſe times; concerning which we have been forewarned, that there ſhould come *ſcoffers walking after their own luſts*, and *reſiſting the truth* (5); overpowering reaſon with noiſe and nonſenſe, and turning the higheſt myſteries of religion into a jeſt—that *of our own-ſelves* men ſhould ariſe *ſpeaking perverſe things to draw away diſciples after them*—and that the *deceiveableneſs of unrighte-*

(5) 2 *Pet.* iii. 3. 2 *Tim.* iii. 8.

ouſneſs

ouſneſs under the cloak of wiſdom and godlineſs, or darkneſs transformed into the image of light, ſhould ſo far prevail, as to *deceive if it were poſſible the very elect* (6). Theſe expreſſions, with others to the ſame effect, are as alarming as words can make them; and as they teach us to expect, that error and impoſture will be more importunate than ever as the world draws towards a concluſion, we ſhall be inexcuſable if they do not alſo put us upon our guard againſt it.

II. Many falſe opinions, which carry the appearance of novelty, being nothing more than old battered veſſels brought out of the dock, where they had reſted in peace for ſome centuries, and equipped with new tackle and rigging; it may be of uſe to give you, in the ſecond place, ſome brief *hiſtory* of the *errors and deluſions of paſt times*; in which I have likewiſe a farther view of exciting you to the ſtudy of ancient hiſtory, particularly that of the church, as it ſtands connected with the hiſtory of the four great monarchies of the world *.

(6) *Matth.* xxiv. 24.

* *Rollin's* Ancient Hiſtory is an excellent work: and Dr. *Newton* (the preſent Biſhop of *Briſtol*) his Diſcourſes on *Prophecy*, particularly the firſt volume, deſerve great attention.

Ever

Ever ſince the fall of man, God hath been ſeparating and ſupporting a ſociety upon earth, furniſhed with ſuch inſtitutions, doctrines, and precepts, as ſhould lead the members of it from death unto life. This ſociety the enemy of mankind hath always been endeavouring to corrupt, by ſeducing its members either from the faith or the morality of the divine law. His main engine in the early ages was idolatry, or the worſhip of falſe gods, whoſe moral characters were ſo many examples of all practical violence and impurity, which were conſequently introduced by their votaries as neceſſary and even laudable branches of religious duty. *Pompey* is reported to have taken advantage of this convenient relation between practical debauchery and the worſhip of the heathen deities, when he converted his famous theatre into a temple, and dedicated it to *Venus*. He was apprehenſive that the cenſors would take cognizance of the corruption propagated amongſt the people by the diſorders of that place; and therefore took care to put it upon ſuch a reſpectable footing, that ſobriety ſhould be taken for indevotion, and reformation for ſacrilege: or, as *Tertullian* hath expreſſed himſelf,—*Ita*

damnatum opus templi titulo prætexuit, et disciplinam superstitione delusit (7).

With this double device of idolatry and immorality *Satan* made his attempts upon the church of *Israel*. Sometimes he led them first to the speculations of heathenism, and thence by an easy transition to a debauched and ungodly life. At other times, as occasion offered, he presented them with all the allurements of lust, intemperance, or worldly glory, and thence betrayed them into the blasphemy of an idolatrous worship (8): for if his purpose was but answered at last, it was always a matter of indifference which end he began at. Great was his success in this way against the *Hebrews* till the Captivity of *Babylon*, the severity and duration of which purged away all the leaven of idolatry from the Jewish nation.

When the Advent of the Messiah was approaching, he set on foot a sort of presumptuous and hypocritical righteousness, grounded on the *opus operatum* of the Mosaic law. This superseded the attainment of internal purity, and rendered the Messiah

(7) *Tertul.* De Spect. c. vi. (8) See *Numb.* xxxi. 15, 16.

unnecessary

unneceſſary as a *ſacrifice* or *ranſom* for ſinners, the principal character under which he had been deſcribed by the law and the prophets. This perſuaſion had the deſired effect: it moved the Scribes and Phariſees to reject their Saviour as a falſe prophet, and put him to death as a malefactor and blaſphemer.

The falling away of the Jews occaſioned the calling of the Gentiles, and the Heathen world was ſoon filled with *Chriſtians* by the preaching of the firſt inſpired diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*; a ſight which troubled and mortified the adverſary, whoſe will it is, that all *ſhould periſh*, and none *ſhould come to repentance*. Therefore he ſtirred up the ſecular powers of the earth, then at his own devotion, to perſecute the church, and affright the ſervants of God from their profeſſion by the proſpect of poverty, tortures, and bloodſhed. After ten dreadful perſecutions, ariſing from the principles of the Heathen philoſophy and ſuperſtition, the kingdoms of the world became the *kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt*, by the reception of the Goſpel in the Roman empire: at which great and remarkable criſis, Satan being driven from his ſtrongeſt hold of idolatry, immediately

raiſed up in its place the *Arian* hereſy, the birth and progreſs of which runs exactly parallel with the converſion of the emperor *Conſtantine*.

By the uſe of this new-invented engine, the enemy, who had hitherto made his chief attack from without, having now got within the walls of the Chriſtian fortreſs, firſt broke the peace of the church; introducing confuſion, diſtraction, and perſecution (9), together with ſuch a multitude of metaphyſical experiments upon the ſimplicity of the primitive faith, as ſoon corrupted the Eaſtern part of the empire, and terminated naturally in the grand impoſture of *Mahomet*; whoſe innumerable followers are all *Anti-trinitarians*; and whoſe chief ſeat at this day, by the juſt judgment of God, is upon the very ſpot that was choſen by the firſt Chriſtian emperor.

In the Weſtern church, which retained its integrity with reſpect to the main articles of the faith, the life of religion, after the ſixth century, began to be overlaid by ſuperabundance of ceremonies, and the prevalence of monaſtic ſuperſtition. Doctrines not warranted by the Scripture made their

(9) For a true account of the ſpirit and practices of the *Arian* heretics, conſult Dr. *Cave*'s Life of *Athanaſius*.

entranee by inſenſible degrees; and as the age of real miracles declined, legendary frauds were ſet on foot, by which the faith of ſome men, who either could not or would not make proper diſtinctions, hath been ſtretched till it broke aſunder in the experiment. To theſe abuſes many grievous impoſitions were added from worldly policy and the affectation of grandeur *. However, it ought to be remembered, for the honour of this nation, that the old *Britiſh* and *Scotiſh* biſhops withſtood the encroachments of the Romiſh ſee for many centuries; on which account their piety hath been but meanly regarded by ſome zealous Catholics.

In the middle ages, the liturgy of the bleſſed Virgin was admitted in form, as a proper prelude to thoſe romantic expeditions, wherein all the military force of *Chriſtendom* was muſtered together to wage war with the enemies of their *faith*; againſt

* When you read the Hiſtory of the Church of *England*, you will obſerve, that the uſurpations of the Roman ſee continue in a riſing ſtate from the *ſixth* to the *thirteenth* century; at which time they were become ſo abominable, that many learned and devout perſons, even amongſt the Catholics, began to exclaim very freely againſt the *Vicar of Chriſt*, as too nearly reſembling the perſon and character of *Antichriſt*.

whom

whom, ſo far as the cauſe of their *religion* was concerned, God had never allowed them the uſe of any weapons, but ſuch (1) as are appropriated to the ſpiritual warfare.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the drawing of the temporal ſword in the cauſe of Chriſtianity, ſhould have been ſo ſeverely rebuked in the perſon of St. *Peter*, whoſe pretended ſucceſſors have ſo often avowed the legality of defending their church and promoting its intereſt with fire and ſword. On this occaſion, the ſentence denounced by our Saviour was executed in a ſtrange manner — *They that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the Sword* (2): for the princes of *Europe* being inſtigated to the holy war by the *Pope*, perſevered in the deluſion till two millions of Chriſtians are computed to have periſhed. And for all this expence of blood and treaſure, the church hath little or nothing to ſhew at this day, but the figures of antient warriors, and ſome fragments of ruſty armour.

When the darkneſs of this period happily ended in that revival of arts and learning which brought on the *Reformation*, it was

(1) *Iſa.* ii. 4. *Mic.* iv. 3. (2) *Mat.* xxvi. 52.

the

the intereſt of the adverſary to turn the principles and proceedings of that time to his own advantage: and accordingly, under the notion of *Reformation*, a term very reſpectable in itſelf, he took occaſion to revive all the folly and wickedneſs that had ever entered into the heart of man. *Chriſtians*, who had carried on confederate wars with *Moors* and *Saracens*, now turned their arms againſt one another; and the ſeveral kingdoms of *Europe* were converted, for conſcience-ſake, into ſo many theatres of war and deſolation.

In the church of *Rome*, thoſe unſcriptural doctrines, which had before been only tolerated and encouraged, were now confirmed into articles of faith, not to be rejected but under the penalty of damnation itſelf: and the infallibility of that authority by which they were eſtabliſhed being one of the number, the caſe became deſperate.

Amongſt thoſe who called themſelves *Proteſtants*, ſome there were, who could not be perſuaded they were as devout as they ought to be, till they were out of their ſenſes (3), and had uſed their utmoſt endeavours to turn the world upſide down:

(3) The German *Anabaptiſts*, and the more modern *Quakers*.

while

while others (4) could not think themſelves well reformed, till they had purged their ſyſtem of all the capital articles of Chriſtianity; and indeed till they could hardly diſtinguiſh their own creed from that of *Mahomet*. The *Socinian* being weak in *faith*, labours to make all things *eaſy* and *rational*; and with this view takes upon him to remove all that *ſpirituality* from the myſteries of the Goſpel, in which their life and efficacy conſiſts. The ſoul and body of a man are two different things; and it hath always been a perplexing queſtion to explain the nature of their *union*. But if you *kill* the man, there is no farther difficulty: and ſuch is the *Socinian* ſolution of a myſtery.

This period brings us down to the preſent age; in which we have reaſon to bleſs God that we find the church of *England* ſtill preſerving in it an apoſtolical ſucceſſion of government, together with a plan of unadulterated Chriſtian Doctrine, the neareſt of any upon earth to the apoſtolical and primitive pattern.

Here then we have the ſtage, on which the devil is employing the choiceſt of his artifices.

(4) The *Socinians*.

III. It

III. It ſhall be my endeavour, therefore, to ſhew you, thirdly, the particular *modes of deceit* with which we are moſt liable to be infected at *this time*.

I am far from pretending to have diſcovered them all: they may very probably reſemble their author, whoſe name is *Legion*: yet I apprehend they will all be found reducible to the four following heads, 1. of *Infidelity*; 2. *Enthuſiaſm*; 3. *Lukewarmneſs*; and 4. *Superſtition*.

1. For promoting the firſt of theſe, *Infidelity*, there are and have been many agents at work, who all agree in the ſame general miſtake of aſcribing to natural reaſon a power which it hath not, and an office with which it was never inveſted. Man, they tell us, as a creature accountable to his Maker, is under the direction of his own nature, and not under that of a divine light and authority (5). But if

(5) The heathens have ſaid many things which will riſe up in judgment againſt our modern Deiſts, who go to greater lengths for the moſt part than ever the heathens did.

Nec natura poteſt juſto ſecernere iniquum,
Dividit ut bona diverſis, fugienda petendis.
Hor. lib. i. ſat. iii.

Pliny, in the preface to his 7th book, ſpeaking of human nature, hath theſe and other remarkable words: —— flens

nature were now in its perfect ſtate, it doth by no means follow that it would be a lawgiver to itſelf; it being far the moſt reaſonable to believe, that the mind, even of *Adam* himſelf before his fall, ſtood as much in need of a divine light to reveal *heavenly* things to it, as the eyes of his body needed the light of the ſun, in order to diſcover *terreſtrial* objects. If nature is now imperfect, they can be none of its friends who would impoſe upon it the fruitleſs labour of working without light, and with a depraved judgment, in order to forge its own religion.

That human reaſon cannot furniſh itſelf with truth out of its own ſtores, will appear beſt from an undoubted matter of fact; namely, that it is in many caſes unable to diſtinguiſh that truth which is offered to it; after which it will hardly be expected, at leaſt by any chriſtian diſputant, that reaſon ſhould be able to *invent*, what of itſelf it hath not power to *receive*.

animal—a ſuppliciis vitam auſpicatur, unam tantùm ob culpam quia *natum eſt*. Heu dementiam ab iis initiis exiſtimantium ad ſuperbiam ſe genitos!—Cætera ſentire naturam ſuam, alia pernicitatem uſurpare, alia præpetes volatus, alia vires, alia nare: *hominem ſcire nihil ſine doctrinâ*, non fari, non ingredi, non veſci breviterque *non aliud naturæ ſponte quam flere*——

The hiſtory of paſt ages, and the experience of the preſent, would ſupply us with many notable examples to this purpoſe, but I ſhall propoſe to you no more than one.

The doctrine of the *reſurrection* gives life and importance to the whole body of religion; without this, all other ſpeculations have ſmall power to affect us, and are but of little value in a world ſubject to death and diſſolution.

In the natural creation a variety of reſurrections are exhibited to our ſenſes. The light of every day dies and riſes again: the body of man ſleeps and wakes, emerging as it were every morning from a temporary death: ſeeds and roots which lie buried in the earth ſpring up again, and are quickened out of corruption: in the autumn, the whole verdure of the ſummer falls dead upon the ground, but returns to its former ſtate at the appearance of the ſpring. So that if the reaſoning faculties of men could have inferred with preciſion any ſpiritual truth from an analogy in nature (the only proper ground of *natural* religion), it muſt have been this of a reſurrection; which yet did never make any part of the religion or philoſophy of the heathens. This doc-

trine was at length preached to them by St. *Paul* upon unqueſtionable authority: but we are told, that *when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead they mocked* (6). It was the beſt intelligence ever brought into the world: it was publiſhed at *Athens*, a ſeat of learning, by as great an orator as ever ſpoke: all nature ſuggeſts and confirms the truth of it: but philoſophers, through wiſdom, neither believed nor underſtood it!

Human reaſon then, viewing things by its own light, could neither *diſcover* this doctrine nor *receive* it. The firſt of theſe defects demonſtrates its *impotence*, the ſecond its *corruption*. Yet it is truſted to, as if it were capable of dictating infallibly upon the higheſt ſubjects. It is boaſted of as all-ſufficient by the whole tribe of *Deiſts*: and alas! it is ſometimes recommended in a ſtrain not much inferior by divines, that is, by ſome men who ſpeak out of a pulpit; from whence I am well aſſured it hath given great offence to the chriſtianly-affected part of the laity; many of whom having laid a much greater ſtreſs than either prudence or charity will war-

(6) *Acts* xvii. 32.

ran

rant upon the example of a few, and I hope but a few clergymen, have wandered from the temple in search of better intelligence at the tabernacle.

The office our unbelievers have assigned to reason, is that of knowing and judging of things by inspection or intuition: whence it is plain, they either know not the proper use of reason, or think it their interest to misrepresent it. For *to reason*, is to investigate the truth or falsehood of any proposition, by comparing it with its *evidence*; and this evidence ought to be some fact, of which the outward senses are competent judges. But to consider any proposition abstracted from its evidence, as they consider the doctrines of revelation, is not to *reason*, but to *imagine* and *conjecture*: in which case, appetite, passion, prejudice, and interest, will have the place of evidence; wit, ridicule, and a few splendid expressions, will have the place of argument; and *opinion*, not knowledge, will be the result of all.

Therefore God never appeals to our reason as to an absolute judge of the *propriety* of what is revealed; but applies to it thro' the senses, with such evidence as cannot be

be reſiſted *; after which reaſon hath nothing more to do with the *contents* of revelation, than to ſearch the ſcripture, and implore the divine grace that it may be enabled to underſtand and ſee the fitneſs of them. It was wiſely and piouſly obſerved by the great lord *Verulam* (1), that if we believe only what is agreeable to our own apprehenſion of things, *we give conſent to the* matter *and not to the* author; *which is no more than we ſhould allow to a ſuſpected or diſcredited witneſs: but that faith which was accounted to* Abraham *for righteouſneſs, was of ſuch a point as whereat* Sarah *laughed; who therein was an image of natural reaſon.*

If you are attentive to the diſtinction between *knowledge* and *opinion*, and alſo between the *uſe* of reaſon and the *abuſe* of it, you will be able to ſee through moſt of the workings of *infidelity*, and be ſecured againſt the deluſion of it. You will likewiſe ſee the reaſon, why they who are infidels in reſpect to the chriſtian myſteries, are frequently ſceptics at large in reſpect of other things: this being the natural con-

* *The* works *that I do in my Father's name, they bear* witneſs *of me.* John x. 25.

(1) Adv. of Learn.

ſequence

ſequence of their method, which is radically abſurd, and can lead them regularly to no concluſion whatſoever.

2. But we are now to be upon our guard againſt another ſpecies of deceivers, the *Enthuſiaſts* of the preſent age.

Wiſe men have obſerved, that extremes naturally produce one another. Reaſon is now exalted to a ſuper-eminence which it never poſſeſſed before in the Chriſtian world. It aſpires, like *Lucifer*, to be higher than God himſelf; and in the attempt frequently falls below the meaſures of common ſenſe. The enthuſiaſt obſerving this, determines to make no uſe of it; but delivers himſelf up wholly to divine impulſes and immediate revelations. He thinks himſelf ſo filled with the *power* of religion as to be above the *forms* of it. He is for taking Chriſt as his ſaviour, without ſubmitting to (and generally without underſtanding) the rules of his goſpel as the neceſſary conditions of his ſalvation. He values the grace of God, but deſpiſes the outward means by which it is adminiſtered; and thereby reduces himſelf to the miſerable dilemma of being unable to diſtinguiſh between the *ſpirit of truth* and the *ſpirit of error*.

The

The grace of God, by his own appointment, is always conveyed to us through ſome outward and viſible inſtitutions, which ſerve as pledges to aſſure us of its *reality*, and as ſigns or marks to ſecure us from all *deceit* and *impoſition*. Our bleſſed Saviour, by his own immediate authority, hath given us an outward church, an outward miniſtry, an outward baptiſm, an outward communion, an outward revelation; and hath appointed the fruit of good works, viſible to all men, as the external witneſs of our internal adoption. His religion is of a like nature to man for whoſe benefit it was deſigned: it conſiſts of a ſoul and a body, and if theſe are ſeparated, death is the conſequence. The enthuſiaſt however cannot ſet up for himſelf till he has made this ſeparation, and converted his religion as far as poſſible into an inviſible ſpirit, which having no viſible marks whereby it can be known, nor any miracles to warrant its divine origination, muſt reſt upon the word and authority of its publiſher, who is at liberty to make what he pleaſes of it, and will ſeldom fail to give himſelf a good character.

The expedients of an *inviſible church, abſolute election and reprobation, aſſurance*

(or

(or ſelf-conceit) *of ſalvation, indefectibility of grace*, which ſuperſede the uſe of means, the outward calling, and the fruits of righteouſneſs, have been found very ſerviceable to all the irregular claſſes of modern Chriſtians, who have invented this ingenious method of ſupplying all defects with an high hand; and therefore theſe notions have been laid down, and are now inſiſted upon as fundamental and characteriſtic, by thoſe who call themſelves the peculiar *children of God*. Thoſe outward ſigns which ſerve for the direction and aſſurance of peaceable believers, are ſo many obſtacles in the way of every impoſtor; whence none of this ſort ever did or ever will ariſe, without making light of the church as a mere ſtone wall, and of all inſtitutions as dead formalities.

But if the divine mercy through theſe means, carnal and inſignificant as they may appear to a ſelf-exalted imagination, is pleaſed to offer us the powers of grace unto ſalvation: the ſincere Chriſtian will thankfully acknowledge, that God has an undoubted right to ſave us in his *own way*. He hath been inſtructed, that a weak rod ſtretched out by the hand of *Moſes* the miniſter of God, could divide the waves of

the Red Sea and confound the hoſt of *Egypt:* that the waters of *Jordan*, cheap as they were held by the proud *Syrian* nobleman, could cleanſe an otherwiſe incurable leproſy: and that even clay and the mire of the ground itſelf, when applied by the Saviour of the world, could give light to the eyes that were born in darkneſs.

If any man then offers himſelf as the miniſter of God for the ſaving of our ſouls, and we can diſcover that he has this new way of bringing it to paſs, under the open violation of charity, and in deſpite to the method God himſelf hath ordained; our duty is to pray for him that his heart may be humbled, and to take heed to ourſelves that he does not ſeduce us; with which view I ſhall ſubjoin that warning given by our maſter to his diſciples, and which belongs properly to this part of the ſubject— *If they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold he is in the* deſart, *go not forth; behold he is in the* ſecret chambers, *believe it not* (2): for the way of ſalvation is no new diſcovery; it is neither modern nor private; it was invented neither in the *field* nor in the *con-*

(2) *Matth.* xxiv. 26, 27.

venticle;

venticle; but was made as obvious and diſcernible as a flaſh of lightning, which *cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt*, the Goſpel having been propagated, and the church eſtabliſhed, in one form all over the world.

The enthuſiaſt, ſuppoſing himſelf to have a rule within his own breaſt, which ſets him above all controul, and that every ſtep taken by him muſt tend to the glory of God becauſe he takes it, is in no diſpoſition to conform himſelf to any kind of *authority* in other men; and if he is croſſed in any of his wild undertakings, inſtead of ſhewing that meekneſs and charity, which no man more loudly pretends to, he is eaſily provoked to utter his *anathemas*, and imitate all the fulminating language of his infallible brother the pope.

I need not inform you, that the univerſity of *Oxford* hath lately been put upon its defence by ſome perſons of this character, who have laboured as hard, and much in the ſame manner too, as Mr. ——, to make themſelves *popular*, and their governors *odious*. They take all occaſions of comparing themſelves, as to their cauſe, conduct, ſufferings, and adverſaries, with *Jeſus Chriſt*, and all the primi-

tive lights of the church: and do thereby lead us to conſider a contraſt, which might have been forgotten unleſs they had forced us upon the remembrance of it. Patience and ſubjection for conſcience-ſake, are fruits peculiar to the Goſpel, and of all others do bring men the neareſt to a reſemblance of the holy apoſtles and their converts; of whom it was ſaid by St. *Paul—being reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being defamed, we intreat* (3):—But is this, or any thing like to it, the practice of our modern apoſtles? let their own works anſwer for them; which demonſtrate but too plainly, that *ſome* of them at leaſt have more *ſtomach* than *conſcience*. They have rather been *reprehended* than *reviled*; but inſtead of bleſſing their cenſurers, their ſpirit takes fire, and vents itſelf in a tempeſt of rhetoric, exceeding all the bounds of charity, and even decency itſelf. They have not been *perſecuted*, but judged by laws enacted to preſerve that order and diſcipline, without which no ſociety can long ſubſiſt: and do they *ſuffer it?* No: they fly in the face of authority with bitter accu-

(3) 1 *Cor.* iv. 13.

ſations;

ſations; and would perſuade the publick they are caſt out only for the faith of Chriſt, and for that ſobriety, zeal, and godlineſs, which ſhould, and I hope would, have recommended them to all ſerious Chriſtians. Inſtead of being *defamed* by authors who blacken them in the dark, the names of their cenſors, and the grounds of the proceedings againſt them, are fairly expoſed to the world: while they, on the other part, throw out anonymous libels; poſting up their governors as the friends of publicans and ſinners, gluttonous, and wine-bibbers; ſubſcribing with their hands, and denying with their hearts, all the fundamental doctrines of the Goſpel; their adverſaries are Scribes, Phariſees, Philiſtines, Heathens, *Goliahs* of *Gath*, *Tertullus* the orator, &c. &c. &c. I wiſh they would conſider how exactly they agree in all this with thoſe *raging waves of the ſea*, who in the laſt century overflowed both church and ſtate; as alſo with our more modern *Confeſſionaliſts*, *Monthly Reviewers*, and even *Blaſphemers and Reprobates*, for whoſe opinions, I believe, they have a very juſt abhorrence; and if they hate their principles, let them avoid their practices, and take care not to be aſſociated

with

with them at laſt as *children of diſobedience*. The learned Dr. *Nowell* hath ſet their whole cauſe, and its noiſy advocate, in a very diſagreeable light without *railing* at either; and if they are not ſilenced when every body elſe is ſatisfied, in this they only follow the example of their predeceſſors, and verify that obſervation of biſhop *Bull*,—*bawl they will to eternity*.

Inſtead of making any farther remarks, which would be both foreign to my deſign, and alſo unneceſſary in themſelves, I ſhall cloſe this part of my ſubject by preſenting you with the picture of *an Enthuſiaſt*, as it was drawn by a great maſter of divinity, ſentiment, and expreſſion, who while alive was deficient neither in the forms nor the powers of Chriſtianity; and whatever ſhall become of my letter, I am confident you will think this piece worth preſerving.

" The ſpirit of *Enthuſiaſm* puts out the " eye of *reaſon*, and deſtroys the ſobriety " of religion. It leaves a man no prin- " ciple or rule but that of *imagination* and " *impulſes*: can make him believe that he " is in the exaltation of *charity*, while he " is in the very *gall of bitterneſs*, and de- " lighting himſelf in the ſin of *Ham*. He " is not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities,

to

" revile and beſpatter both church and
" ſtate, to expoſe the nakedneſs of *father*
" and *mother*; and can perſuade himſelf
" that all this is out of an high ſenſe and
" zeal to the glory of God! this can *ſanc-*
" *tify* ſchiſm and rebellion in his eyes;
" and in ſhort he can do no evil, becauſe
" he thinks every thing that he does to be
" good; for he has an *impulſe* for it. He
" imitates nothing of the *Apoſtles* but their
" *miracles!* turns religion into romance,
" and will do nothing ordinary. He keeps
" himſelf in a ſphere above other mortals;
" whence he looks down upon them with
" *diſdain*, which he calls *pity*. His own
" infirmities, if he ſees any in himſelf, he
" calls human frailties; but all others of-
" fend of *malicious wickedneſs!* he is of all
" men the moſt impatient of *contradiction*,
" or any reflection upon his *reputation*;
" and yet he ſeeketh not *honour of men*;
" and thinks himſelf an holy and humble
" man of heart! he is all made up of *con-*
" *tradictions! proud* in his *humility*; *meek*
" in his *rage*; *charitable* in *railing*; *zealous*
" in *lying*; *patient* in his *revenge*; for
" *unity* in *ſchiſm*; and loyal in his *rebel-*
" *lion!* he knows nothing *truly*; and
" *himſelf* leaſt of all! an *hypocrite* to him-
" ſelf!

" ſelf! he is every thing but what he is! " he is *proof* againſt *reaſon*: there is no " method with him but *exorciſm!* and ſo " it is time to have done with him." (5)

3. Our next danger is from the error of *lukewarmneſs*, which is alſo known by its other names of *Comprehenſion* and *Latitudinarianiſm*.

With thoſe who are neither downright infidels nor enthuſiaſts, it is too common a faſhion to regard the Chriſtian religion, not as the *one thing needful*, but as a ſort of expletive in human life, the myſteries and precepts of which may be made ſubſervient to worldly intereſt and convenience: and ſome are not aſhamed to own it as a principle, that the Goſpel is to be ſoftened and accommodated to the times, not the times corrected by the Goſpel.

This *Laodicean* indifference was ſpoken of by our Saviour himſelf, as a diſtemper peculiar to the laſt age of the world, in which the *love of many ſhould wax cold*(6). From this and ſome other expreſſions, we have reaſon to expect a relaxation of diſcipline, and an abatement of that zeal which

(5) See a pamphlet intitled *Caſſandra*, No. II. p. 39. 4to. An. 1704.

(6) *Matt.* xxiv. 12.

in

in better days was wont to accompany the Chriſtian faith; and that we ſhould ſee inſtead of it a bare nominal profeſſion, with little reſolution and leſs patience to take up the yoke and bear the croſs.

Such is the effect of this ſpirit upon the laity, as to ſink them into a middle ſtate betwixt Chriſtianity and heatheniſm; diſpoſing them to reconcile the ſervice of *God* with the ſervice of *Mammon*, and to keep up, as well as they can, what by its own nature can never be laſting, a neutrality betwixt *Chriſt* and *Belial*.

When it ſeizes upon men of eccleſiaſtical functions, it renders them indifferent to the due order, government, and diſcipline of the church; leſs concerned for the ſalvation of their people than ſuch men ought and were wont to be: it turns their induſtry to ſloth, their courage to cowardice. And here I would leave it to thoſe who know more of the times, and are better able to judge, whether there is not a general appearance of ſomewhat too much like a good underſtanding betwixt the church and the world; a tacit conſent not to trouble or moleſt one another; tho' all the grounds of enmity ſtill do, and muſt remain, ſo long as the world, the

 fleſh,

fleſh, and the devil ſhall continue to be what they are.

This ſtate, though not altogether hopeleſs, is yet leſs hopeful than that of mere heatheniſm; as a relapſe after the cure is always more dangerous than the original diſeaſe: whence it is ſaid to the church of *Laodicea* (7), *I would thou wert either cold or hot*; to teach us, that the condition of heathens as yet unenlightened is preferable to that of amphibious Chriſtians, who can live *with* the goſpel or *without* it: the former being more likely to be animated and inflamed whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to call them, than the latter to recover the zeal they have loſt.

4. The laſt mode of deceit I propoſed to ſpeak of is that of *ſuperſtition*.

Enthuſiaſm boaſts itſelf in the *power* of the goſpel, deſpiſing its outward inſtitutions. *Superſtition*, on the other hand, neglects the power and ſpirit of religion, aſcribing a miraculous virtue to *outward forms*.

(7) The learned Dr. *More* was of opinion, and has an expreſs treatiſe upon the ſubject, that the ſeven churches addreſſed by St. *John*, are prophetic of *ſeven ſtates* of the Chriſtian church, in the order of time to the conſummation. If this were ſo, then *Laodicea*, which is laſt in order, (and likewiſe in ſenſe, the name being derived from Λαὸς δικη, *judicium populi*,) was intended to deſcribe to us the temper of the laſt ſtate, with which it ſo well agrees.

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When this error is mentioned, we think it exemplified only in the characters of Heathens, Jews, and Papiſts; whoſe cuſtom it hath been to place a vain confidence in the ceremonial part of devotion: and we look upon it as a deluſion of which Proteſtants are in little danger; amongſt whom there are too many, God knoweth, who have nothing left of religion but the outward form and appearance. They come to church with a ſolemn countenance, and ſend their children thither to be baptiſed, and think it neceſſary to appear at the Lord's table; and ſo far as Chriſtianity is a form, are willing enough to be ſaved by it: while it appears too plainly, that no doctrine of their religion has any ſhare in their *affections*, becauſe it ſeldom or never makes any part of their *converſation*. When they hear or ſpeak of worldly things, we may perceive they are in earneſt; but if they ſubmit to hear of heavenly things once a week within the walls of the church, nothing farther is to be expected from them. And this empty ſhell of religion, they think, is as much as any prudent perſon ought to pretend to, unleſs he will run the hazard of being reputed a *Methodiſt* by thoſe, who do not know, or at leaſt have

not conſidered, whether there is any difference between a bigoted *Calviniſt* and a *primitive Chriſtian*.

The true ſtate of the caſe is this. He that would be ſaved from the *penalties* of ſin in the world to come, muſt firſt be ſaved from the *dominion* of it in this world. God hath therefore demanded of us the ſervice of the *heart*; and all the external forms of religion are deſigned as a body, of which, faith, devotion, and love to God and man, are the ſoul and ſpirit. *He is a Jew*, ſaid the Apoſtle, *who is one inwardly*; and we may affirm him to be a Chriſtian, who with the ſpirit, as well as the body, ſerves that God who is the father of both.

I ſay then, it is the *heart* God hath required of us: but a worldly man will be trying whether he cannot part with ſomething elſe as an equivalent. He will offer ſuch a ſervice as conſiſts with an unprofitable life of careleſſneſs and pleaſure; and at his death, perhaps, will give to ſome hoſpital, or other faſhionable charity, a part of that wealth which cannot be carried away with him; and if God will vouchſafe to turn the *Chriſtian life* into a traffick, and accept of ſuch ſordid commutations, then he has ſome reaſon to

think he ſhall be ſaved; and what *Chriſt* hath repreſented to us as the moſt difficult thing in the world, will be found the eaſieſt of all, namely, for *a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

This outſide of religion is cheap and eaſy; it has nothing of the croſs, the yoke, or the burden in it: and what is very grievouſly to be lamented, Chriſtians of this claſs find a moſt convenient ſubterfuge in the reproach that is caſt upon *Methodiſm*, and in that *abuſe of words*, in which the *Rhetoric of the Devil* doth chiefly conſiſt. They never could have invented ſo plauſible a defence as the father of ſophiſtry has now put into their mouths: prayer, and religious converſation, and a detachment from worldly vanity, are (to the beſt of their knowledge) the characteriſtics of *Methodiſm*; and as all approaches to enthuſiaſm are to be carefully avoided, their lifeleſs profeſſion is thought to be as much as can be followed with ſafety and reputation.

As it would be too ſhocking to affirm in ſo many words that God will accept the ſhadow of devotion inſtead of the ſubſtance; this of *Superſtition* is an error which no man dares to publiſh otherwiſe than

than by his example. But ſo numerous are the examples of thoſe who act and converſe as if their whole religion were reduced to this one doctrine, that young people, through the gaiety natural to their ſtage of life, are in great danger of being carried away with the current; or of turning aſide into the by-paths of enthuſiaſm in order to avoid it.

While I am endeavouring to give you warning againſt falſehood and deluſion, God forbid that I ſhould wilfully be the author of any falſehood myſelf. I have therefore, my dear friend, been as faithful and impartial as I poſſibly could in repreſenting to you thoſe four modes of deceit, *Infidelity*, *Enthuſiaſm*, *Lukewarmneſs*, and *Superſtition*, which prevail amongſt us in the preſent age. Every private Chriſtian, and eſpecially the young ſtudent, to whoſe inſpection all the diſtempered productions of the time are preſenting themſelves daily from the preſs, is now under the circumſtances of a veſſel upon the ſea, attacked by all the four winds at once; and great will be his deliverance if he weathers out the danger and gets ſafe to land. That you may be ſomewhat the better provided, I ſhall

IV. Ex-

IV. Expoſe ſome of the *artifices* employed by deceitful men to draw away the ignorant and unwary.

Error maintaining itſelf by its own native ſtrength, would never be able to hold out againſt truth, which is durable as a rock, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword. It therefore ſupplies what is wanting by *importunity* and *cunning*. The *children of this world* are ſaid to be *wiſer in their generation than the children of light*: and experience ſhews it to be equally true, that the factors for falſehood are for the moſt part much better *managers* than the friends of truth: of which I ſhall propoſe a few examples in the order they occur to me.

1. A great ſhew of *zeal* and *earneſtneſs* is a method miſtaken people have found out of ſeducing others into a good opinion of their own ways. No man is qualified to do either good or harm, unleſs he appears to be ſtrongly moved with his own perſuaſion (8). If a man is right, it is the intereſt of Satan to lay him aſleep with a falſe ſecurity: if he is wrong, then he is

(8) Ut ridentibus arrident: ita flentibus adſunt
Humani vultus: ſi vis me flere; dolendum eſt
Primum ipſi tibi———— Hor.

ſtirred

ſtirred up to the exerciſe of all that vigilance in an evil cauſe, which is due only to God and goodneſs.

In that famous conteſt wherein the true God was made known by the ſign of fire from heaven, we ſee the votaries of *Baal* calling out upon him from morning till evening, and ſhedding their very blood in honour of their deity; while the children of the true God were coldly *halting between two opinions* (9). The Iſraelites were juſtly upbraided with this zeal of idolaters, and with their own inconſtancy—*hath a nation changed* their Gods, *which yet are* no Gods? *but my people have changed* their glory *for that which doth not profit* (1). *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Mahometans*, will even aſtoniſh us with their patience and perſeverance; while the ſloth and indifference of *Chriſtians* muſt miſerably undervalue their profeſſion in the judgment of unbelievers. How common is it for them to think it unneceſſary to ſeek the means of life and immortality by attending the public worſhip of God, if the moſt trifling worldly buſineſs can be pleaded againſt it, or if the weather is but indifferent, or the

(9) 1 *Kin.* 18.
(1) *Jer.* ii. 11.

church

church at ſome diſtance: while the *Turk* will undertake a journey of more than two thouſand miles, over burning ſands and uninhabitable deſarts, to viſit the rotten remains of a falſe prophet! It is ſo in all other caſes of the kind: and as the multitude are influenced by what they hear and ſee in their betters, this pompous ſhew of reſpect and veneration recommends a beggarly cauſe, which hath nothing in it to command our reverence, but that reverence, which ſome men, either through wickedneſs or miſtake, have already conferred upon it.

Where the *Mahometans* and *Chriſtians* are intermixed, a Turk never meets a Chriſtian in the ſtreet without repeating his confeſſion of faith—*God is one, and* Mahomet *is his prophet*. But if a Chriſtian meets a Turk in the ſtreets of *London*, he ſtares at his figure, and puts on an inhoſpitable grin at the novelty of his appearance. As to his *faith*, he is not given to ſpeak of it; and if he has any to think of, he is in a better condition than many of his neighbours. In the civil and military proceſſions of the Muſſulmen, it is cuſtomary for a man, riding on a camel richly ornamented, to read the *Koran* in

ſtate as they paſs along the ſtreets. But how ſtrange would it appear to us, if the troops as they march to a review in *Hyde Park*, were attended by the chaplain of the regiment on horſeback, repeating the hundred and forty-fourth pſalm—*Bleſſed be the Lord my ſtrength, who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight, &c.* yet ſurely this would be no very unnatural fight, if our truth were but half ſo hotly purſued as their error.

This is a fruitful topic, and might be carried to a great length: but a farther knowledge of mankind, with proper reading and obſervation, will ſupply you with many examples of different kinds; from which it will appear, that in critical affairs, men who are well diſpoſed are ſo apt to be aſleep, while the cunning and miſchievous are awake, and ſetting all their engines to work; that if you pronounce any deſign to be either wicked or worthleſs, from the noiſe it makes in the world, and the glittering appellations with which it is ornamented, you will not often be diſappointed.

2. As zeal ſerves to ſet off what is evil; ſo the faſhion of the world and the force of example are of ſpecial uſe to prevent the recep-

reception of any good. When our Saviour approved himſelf to the common people by his diſcourſes and miracles, his enemies endeavoured to counterwork them all with that enſnaring queſtion—*Have any of the rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him?* (2) there being many amongſt the vulgar (great and ſmall) who underſtand no argument but this of faſhion and example; error is always ſollicitous to procure an eſtabliſhment in mens opinions: for if this point is once gained, it will be an age at leaſt before any appeal from popular prejudices can come to an hearing. The Goſpel, therefore, directs its followers to proceed upon more rational ground than that of common report; warning us never to be influenced by the voice of a multitude: and it ſtigmatizes that childiſh humour of inconſtancy which accommodates itſelf to every new faſhion, as a *turning about with every wind of doctrine* (3), like a weather-cock, which conſiders not whether the wind brings with it health or peſtilence, but always yields to the blaſt that is ſtrongeſt.

(2) *John* vii. 48. (3) *Eph.* iv. 14.

They who know how to take advantage of the weakneſs of mankind in this reſpect, *extol* what they are unable to prove, and *explode* what they cannot confute. If any diſagreeable truth ſtands in their way, they aſſure the ignorant it is now an *exploded doctrine*; a device which ſaves them the trouble of inventing arguments; and hath generally more effect upon the vanity of ſome minds and the timidity of others, than all the reaſoning in the world. But let us aſk them what true principles, civil, ſacred, or moral, have not been exploded in ſome places and by ſome ſort of people? with men of enlarged ideas, who, by travelling abroad, and making obſervations on the worſt part of the human ſpecies, have turned folly into a ſcience, *Chaſtity* is an *exploded virtue*, and *Marriage* an *exploded inſtitution*; even as induſtry, ſobriety, and the fear of damnation itſelf, are all of them exploded notions with the whole fraternity of thieves, gamblers, houſe-breakers, and highway-men.

3. As a ſequel to the foregoing, it is pretended that religion and orthodoxy have nothing to uphold them, but the *authority* of ſome *men* working upon the *credulity* of others: that the private opinion of *Athanaſius*

nasus is the foundation of the Trinity; the national eſtabliſhment the only unanſwerable proof of Chriſtianity: that all laws for the ſupport of religion are perſecution; all articles of faith, fetters upon the underſtanding: that all the refinements of learning and genius are on one ſide; bigotry, ſuperſtition, and ignorance on the other. In a word, that all the worſt men are with the church, and all the beſt are againſt it. If from ſome works of figure, written againſt the church, all this ſtuff were to be extracted, the remainder might be comprehended in a nutſhell.

Such reflections as theſe, however, ſerve to inflame the indignation of reprobates, and perſuade thoſe who are ready enough to *believe in all unbelief*, that Chriſtians have but little advantage from evidence and argument: and thus they become the proſelytes of every error in faith and practice.

4. When writers have any notions to recommend which may have dangerous influences upon the ſtate of religion or the civil government, it is a great point of art to chuſe a proper vehicle. *Hiſtory* is an acceptable thing; and as it is the humour of theſe times to regard words more than things,

things, and to read rather for pleaſure than improvement, any hiſtory put into tolerable Engliſh is greedily attended to. Ingenuous and unſuſpecting readers underſtand an hiſtory as a detail of facts collected together to ſatisfy their curioſity: but perhaps the undertaker himſelf had no other view, than to put ſuch a face upon the tranſactions of paſt times, with the helps of aggravation, extenuation, ſuppreſſion, and a variety of colouring, as ſhould give ſome countenance to his own favourite principles of *Anarchy* and *Atheiſm*.

When a juggler is about to ſteal ſomething out of your pocket, or convey a rotten egg into it, he looks hard in your face and tells you a long ſtory; that the fraud, while you are under a ſtate of amuſement, may paſs without obſervation. One of the greateſt maſters in this way is *Voltaire*, a man whoſe genius hath fluttered over the ſurface of all ſubjects. He can ſeldom proceed far without throwing in ſome ancient or modern narrative; in the courſe of which, there are ſo many tranſpoſitions, reflections, and falſe aſſociations, that the reader finds himſelf upon enchanted ground, and to his great amazement ſees truth,

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reaſon, and religion, all vaniſhing under a miſt of words.

5. Biography, or the writing of lives, affords another excellent opportunity of the ſame kind: for in ſuch compoſitions, ſome great man, rendered famous to poſterity by his parts, his learning, or his piety, may very conveniently be exhibited as the patron or example of ſome great error, either truly or falſely aſcribed to him: and this being wrought up with other things that are praiſe-worthy, loſes its natural deformity, and ſo comes by an orderly gradation to be excuſed, admitted, applauded. Thus do mankind cheat one another as they cheat vermin; not by offering poiſon in its natural form, but by mixing it up with proper ingredients to diſguiſe and recommend it.

V. I promiſed in the laſt place to lay down ſome brief *rules* for the preſervation of that ſacred truth, which God hath committed to our truſt. And here I am too ſenſible of my own inſufficiency to think myſelf poſſeſſed of ſo valuable a ſecret, as the art of being ſecure at all times againſt the attempts of evil men and evil ſpirits. What I here propoſe is to lay down a few plain directions, which, with

the bleſſing of God upon the uſe and application of them, will contribute much to your own ſafety, and that of the people committed to your charge.

1. And firſt, it will be neceſſary at all times to remember, that the *fulfilling of the miniſtry* we have received, is the mark we are to aim at; without conſidering whether love or hatred, honour or diſhonour, evil report or good report, will be the conſequence of it in this world. With wicked men, all is wrong that does not flatter their pride, and fall in with their prejudices or intereſts. In this reſpect, they are all like that worthleſs king of *Iſrael*, who thus expreſſed his diſapprobation of *Micaiah*'s integrity—*I hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil* (4). The bleſſed Apoſtle St. *Paul*, after much experience of his office, laid it down as a certain rule, that *if he pleaſed men*, that is, if he made a point of it to pleaſe men, he *ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt* (5). He therefore frequently made men very angry without intending it: and the ſame ought to be verified in us his followers, who cannot expect to make ourſelves ac-

(4) 1 *Kin.* xxii. 8. (5) *Gal.* i. 10.

ceptable

ceptable to the multitude by bearing our teſtimony againſt their errors.

If you ſhould guard your hearers againſt the aſſaults of ſpiritual pride, by ſetting before them the ferocity of pretended inſpiration, and pointing out the terrible footſteps which *enthuſiaſm* hath every where left behind it; then you will be in danger of offending the *Methodiſts*; who will pronounce you (in their phraſes) to be a *formaliſt*, an *half-righteous* and *nominal Chriſtian*.

If you ſhould expoſe the *deiſtical* religion of nature, and ſhew it to be groundleſs in itſelf, and ſubverſive of the firſt principles of Chriſtianity; the high-flying reaſoner *a priori* will conceive a mean opinion of your taſte and talents; and perhaps ſtigmatize you as an enemy to human learning, becauſe you have no great opinion of that ſpecies of metaphyſical learning, which (as an excellent writer expreſſes it) will enable a man, *after a courſe of ſeveral years hard ſtudy, to tell you within a triſle, how many* degrees *of the* non-entity *of* nothing *muſt be* annihilated, *before it comes to be* ſomething (6).

(6) See Dr. *Horne*, the preſident of Magdalen college Oxford, his *Apology* &c. p. 17.

If you inſiſt on the abſolute neceſſity of perſonal holineſs, purity of life, and abſtraction from faſhionable folly; the polite ſinner will refer you to the claſs of *Methodiſts*: but then you are to obſerve for your comfort, that the word *Methodiſt*, in the mouths of ſome men, means every thing but an *Atheiſt*.

And laſtly, if you declare with the ſcripture, that God *is not the author of confuſion but of peace* (7), arguing freely againſt the wickedneſs of *hereſy* and *ſchiſm*; the treachery and cowardice of *affected charity*; the corruption, pride, vengeance, and diſorder of *ſpurious liberty* (8); as every miniſter of the church of *England* is bound to do by his profeſſion; then it may be inſinuated, that you are not ſo well affected as you ſhould be to the civil government: though it is moſt reaſonable to believe, that the man who ſpeaks and acts as if he thought himſelf in ſubjection to the law of God, will alſo make it a point of conſcience to be obedient to the government under which he is born; and that if he is true to his *ſubſcriptions* he will not be falſe to his *oaths*.

(7) 1 *Cor.* xiv. 33. (8) See 2 *Pet.* ii. 29.

Some of theſe cenſures muſt inevitably fall upon you, if you ſpeak as truth and your duty will require you to do: but *fret not thyſelf becauſe of the ungodly, neither be thou envious againſt the evil doers*; their words are but wind, and their time is but ſhort; and if an heathen could boaſt, that there is no greater praiſe than that hatred which is the reward of virtue (9), the miniſter of *Chriſt* will be falſe to himſelf as well as his office, if he is overawed by the judgment of a world, which never yet knew its own mind for half an age together. Read the character of *Milton*'s *Abdiel* (1); or if you have read it, conſider it again: it will make you in love with that honeſt fortitude, ſo acceptable to God and to all wiſe and good men, and ſo beneficial in the end to yourſelf; when you ſhall hear it declared in words like thoſe adopted by the poet,

Servant of God, well done! well haſt thou fought
The better fight, who ſingle haſt maintained
Againſt revolted multitudes the cauſe
Of truth.—

2. A ſecond rule is, to regard the religion of the *apoſtolical* and *primitive church*,

(9) Malis diſplicere laudari eſt. SEN.
(1). Par. Loſt. B. v. 805.

as the *pattern* by which your life and your doctrine ought to be regulated.

Works of human invention have feint and obſcure beginnings, and are thence forward progreſſive towards perfection: but the religion of God, like the firſt man he created upon the earth, came perfect from his hands, in the fulneſs of age and ſtrength; and hath ever ſince been in ſome reſpect or other upon the decline. It was the felicity of the Apoſtles to have the example of their great maſter freſh in their remembrance; it was the advantage of the firſt age to be inſtructed immediately by the Apoſtles; and the greateſt advantage we can have now, is to learn what face the Goſpel wore at that time, when the firſt churches, like ſo many *virgins*, were *preſented without ſpot unto Chriſt*.

Every age hath had that common failing of imagining itſelf to be wiſer than all that went before it; and the wiſdom of the preſent is frequently boaſted of by very ignorant people. *Experience* indeed ought to give the laſt age the advantage of all that went before it: I ſay, it *ought*; but ſo far as the age wants either grace or underſtanding, it will fail to apply that experience to any good purpoſe. The tranſactions

actions of paſt times have diſplayed in a fearful manner the folly and miſery of ſome groſs errors; which, inſtead of being followed at this day, would have been baniſhed from the earth long ago, if experience without grace were ſufficient to make men wiſer. Then would the laſt age of the world be the beſt, which is like to be the worſt. But, omitting all theſe conſiderations, let us allow to human literature all that can be deſired; yet to think of improving the Chriſtianity of the primitive church, is to ſuppoſe that its doctrines, like the idols of paganiſm, were *graven by art and man's device*; and they, I fear, who are ſo zealous in behalf of pretended improvements and reformations, would willingly mend the Chriſtian faith by putting ſomething elſe in its place: like diſhoneſt painters, who being truſted with a valuable picture to clean and repair it, bring home again ſome vile copy of their own inſtead of it.

3. A third and laſt rule, is to ſecure the people from error by removing their *ignorance*.

A traveller who is in doubt about the way, will naturally follow the moſt beaten track; and perhaps not be ſenſible of his error till it is too late to correct it. Every igno-

ignorant man is ſuch a traveller as this, who knowing nothing for himſelf, muſt take the judgment of the multitude, and will want nothing to lead him headlong into perdition, but the advice and example of bad company, which is every where to be met with.

So dreadful are the effects of *evil communication*, that prudence will direct you, if poſſible, to anticipate *the counſel of the ungodly*, and be particularly attentive to the preſervation of ſuch minds as are not yet infected with corruption. Other reaſons may be added, to ſhew that your inſtructions are never like to ſucceed ſo happily, as when they are beſtowed upon children and the younger ſort of people. When the ſoil is ſoft in the ſpring of life, the labour of the evangelical, like that of the natural huſbandman, is eaſy and pleaſant: but when it is grown hard and frozen up in the winter of age, no harrow will be ſharp enough to break it in pieces. But above all things remember, that the only way to remove the ignorance, either of young or old, is to inſtruct them publickly and privately in the principles of the Goſpel (2).

(2) "People are not to be *harangued*, but *catechiſed* into "*principles*; and this is not the proper work of the pulpit, "any more than *threſhing* can paſs for *ſowing*—It is want

When

When wickedneſs is epidemical and in a manner triumphant, philoſophical eſſays and empty leſſons of morality without faith, will be of ſmall force as preſervatives againſt the contagion of vice and the machinations of the Devil. But the Goſpel, if delivered in its native truth and purity, will appear to be what it hath always been, the *power of God unto ſalvation*; and if the people hear it in the church, they will have no plauſible pretence for wandering in ſearch of it to other places.

Be not tempted then by any of the ſilly refinements of infidelity, to think *that* a condeſcenſion unworthy of a *ſcholar*, which even in this world will never leſſen your reputation with thoſe whoſe good opinion ought to be valued, and will hereafter be accounted your greateſt glory and honour, that you were *not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*. There is a day approaching, Sir,

" of catechizing, which has been the true cauſe of thoſe " numerous ſects, ſchiſms, and wild opinions, which have " ſo diſturbed the peace, and bid fair to deſtroy the reli- " gion of the nation. For the conſciences of men have " been filled with wind and noiſe—So that amongſt the " moſt ſeraphical *illuminati*, and the higheſt *puritan perfec-* " *tioniſts*, you ſhall find people, of fifty, threeſcore, and " fourſcore years old, not able to give that account of their " faith, which you might have had heretofore of a boy of " nine or ten." *South*'s Sermons, vol. v. p. 34.

when

when it will not be enquired how we were thought of, or how we were ſpoken of, by the proud *Arian* or the heathenizing *moraliſt*; but whether we have added to the number of the righteous, and ſought after that praiſe which cometh only from God?

4. Having now ſaid as much upon this ſubject as I can expect you will attend to, and perhaps more than is neceſſary, I ſhall lay aſide my pen for the preſent, with the expectation of employing it again in your ſervice: for if this letter, in which I have a view only to your *principles*, ſhould meet with your approbation, I may propoſe ſomething at another opportunity for the advancement of your *ſtudies*. In the mean time, I hope you will accept of what I have already offered, as a ſmall pledge of that very ſincere friendſhip and affection, with which I ſhall always remain,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged

And very obedient Servant.

TWO

SERMONS,

Preached in the Parish Church of

HARWICH in the County of ESSEX,

ON

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1778.

Speedily will be Publiſhed,

A SERMON on the *Natural Evidences of Chriſtianity.* Preached before the Clergy at the Viſitation at Sudbury, in Suffolk, May 21, 1778.

By the Author of theſe Diſcourſes.

3

The Fear of God, and the Benefits of Civil Obedience.

TWO

SERMONS,

Preached in the Parish Church of

HARWICH in the County of ESSEX,

ON

SUNDAY JUNE 21, 1778.

AND

Published at the Request of the Audience.

By WILLIAM JONES, B. A.

Rector of Paston in Northamptonshire, Minister of Nayland in Suffolk, and Fellow of the Royal Society.

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MDCCLXXVIII.

195...75

SERMON I.

1 PET. ii. 17.

Fear God.

MAN is diſtinguiſhed from the brute creation by a knowledge of God and a ſenſe of his perfections. The beaſts of the field are fed by him, but they are inſenſible of his bounty: they obſerve his laws with the ſtricteſt obedience, but they know not their lawgiver.

Man hath an higher privilege: his view extends to that inviſible power, which made and ſuſtains the world: he ſees the hand, which filleth all things living with plenteouſneſs; he knows the

author of thoſe laws by which he is to regulate his conduct; and looks for his reward from that judge, who is able to read all the ſecrets of his heart.

Brute creatures are ſubjected to the power of man; but man himſelf being the ſubject of God, is bound to own his authority on every occaſion; to allow him that pre-eminence, to which he is intitled in all ſubjects; and never to proceed in any argument, as if God had no concern with the queſtion. When we live and act by this great rule of *ſetting the Lord always before us*, we are *men*, properly ſo called; becauſe we are influenced by a kind of *fear* unknown to all irrational creatures, and are thereby exalted to our true and proper dignity as ſubjects and members of the kingdom of God.

Fear may ſeem to be a baſe and ſervile paſſion; and ſuch indeed it is, when it hath an unworthy object; but when God is the object of it, it becomes honourable

to

to the mind, and is the very teſt of the human character.

When fear is underſtood in a more general ſenſe, and is qualified with prudence, it diſtinguiſhes men from brutes, and wiſe men from fools. The ignorant fear nothing becauſe they know nothing; and ſome men are offending others and expoſing themſelves all their lives, through an unthinking confidence, which never knows when to fear, nor what to be afraid of: inſomuch, that the want of fear argues the want of wit in common life, as it undoubtedly argues the want of grace in religion.

But above all other fear, the fear of God is moſt neceſſary to man. The conſcience is bound neither by temporal rewards nor temporal puniſhments; but he that fears God, who ſeeth in ſecret and will reward openly, is poſſeſſed of the only principle that can carry him ſafe through things temporal to things eternal.

To believe in God, and to fear him, ought to be the ſame thing with all reaſonable men: but experience teaches us, that many who would be aſhamed to deny God openly, do not live as if they feared him. I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to point out to you, ſome of thoſe conſiderations, which muſt lead us to the fear of God, and confirm us in it. The firſt of theſe is the conſideration of his *power*, as it is manifeſted to us in the natural world. It is impoſſible for the mind to conſider the lights of heaven, the changes of the ſeaſons, the operations of the elements, the frame and conſtitution of the human body, without being filled and amazed with a perception of the Creator's power: and when the mind perceives the greatneſs of God, it will at the ſame time feel the littleneſs and weakneſs of its own faculties; and thus it will be led to the beginnings of devotion. *They ſhall fear thee*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *as long as the ſun and moon endure:*

dure *: by which it is meant, that these glorious luminaries must be blotted out of heaven, before we can lose sight of that natural inference, that the Maker of them is the great object of our fear and reverence.

What force of language can impress the mind with such an awe, as a sight of that majestic preparation in the sky, which precedes a storm of thunder: when the clouds, as if they were summoned by a divine command, are gathered together from all quarters of the heaven: when the air is dark above, the earth still and silent beneath, as if it were attending to the voice that is to follow, and fearful of that fire, which is a pattern and forerunner of the last judgment? Well might it be confessed by *Elihu* in the book of *Job* — *at this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of its place* †. No man has any reason to value himself upon his courage,

* Psal. lxxii. 5. † Job xxxvii. 1.

if

if he can behold with indifference a ſcene which is intended to inſpire us all with the fear of God, thus armed with the inſtruments of vengeance: ſuch courage is no honour to any body; indeed it is not courage but ſtupidity. In different minds the effect will be different. In ſome it will awaken the terrors of guilt, and torment them before the time: but good men will be led by it to a ſubmiſſive veneration, which brings them nearer to God and makes them better acquainted with themſelves: and God forbid that our philoſophy ſhould ever cure us of our infirmity.

Other conſiderations ſuggeſting the fear of God will ariſe to us from his judgments againſt ſin, and the works of his providence in the great changes and revolutions of the world.

The deſtruction of the whole world by the waters of a flood, is a fact atteſted to this day by the natural ſtate of the earth, and the inconteſtible monuments of that cataſtrophe, diſcoverable in all parts of the globe,

globe, which have frequently engaged the attention of curious people. The whole natural face of the earth, divided into deep furrows and ragged precipices, ſhews it to be a ruin: and if the former world was deſtroyed for the ſin of thoſe that dwelt in it, the author of that deſtruction muſt needs be an object of fear to all ſucceeding generations, whoſe corruptions and offences will again draw down the vengeance of heaven in a more dreadful ſhape; when he that deſtroyed the world by the waters of a flood, ſhall be revealed in flaming fire. Then ſhall thoſe fearful words of the Pſalmiſt be accompliſhed,—*let God ariſe, and let his enemies be ſcattered; let them alſo that hate him flee before him. Like as the ſmoke vaniſheth, ſo ſhalt thou drive them away; and like as wax melteth at the fire, ſo ſhall the ungodly periſh at the preſence of God**.

The deſtruction of Sodom was ſet forth for an example to men of God's

* Pſal. lxviii. 1, &c.

wrath

wrath against ſin, and a figure of that laſt judgment which ſhall overtake the world. What Sodom once was, ſuch is the world now; a place profeſſing the enjoyment of life, but given up to falſe pleaſures and unnatural appetites. What Sodom now is, ſuch ſhall the world be, when he that rained from heaven upon Sodom, ſhall as certainly ſcatter the fire of his wrath upon all the kingdoms of the earth.

We are to inſtruct ourſelves in the fear of God, by conſidering other like inſtances of his providence, particularly the wonders wrought upon *Egypt*, and at the Red Sea, and in the land of *Canaan*; the overthrow of the hard-hearted *Pharaoh*, and the extirpation of thoſe idolatrous nations, whoſe inheritance was taken away for their abominations and iniquities. The mighty monarchy of *Babylon*, the firſt and greateſt empire of the world, was made inſtrumental in bringing to paſs the purpoſes of God

againſt the Jews, and detaining them in captivity for their repeated acts of apoſtacy: but when the people of God were to be replaced in their own land, the power of this great kingdom departed from it in one night, and was transferred to Cyrus the Perſian, by whoſe command the temple at Jeruſalem was rebuilt, and the Jewiſh œconomy reſtored. While the viſionary hand was recording upon the wall the judgment of God againſt the impious and profane *Belſhazzar*, his countenance changed, and his knees ſmote togther with fear: and the hiſtory of this affair, as it ſtands in the prophet *Daniel*, is ſo terrible, that it may well have the like effect upon us, who read it at this day.

When the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt was about to be revealed, the *Roman* empire became univerſal, and the country of *Judæa* a *Roman* province; whence it came to paſs, that our Saviour ſuffered death after the *Roman* manner, according to

the ſcriptures; his preachers were diſperſed about the world; the Jews were expelled for their laſt apoſtacy; and Chriſtianity became the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire, againſt all the power and intereſt of Paganiſm. When theſe things were accompliſhed, this great kingdom became a prey to northern barbarians, and was broken into ſmaller independent ſtates; ſo that nothing now remains of a *Roman* king, but the name, in a certain diviſion of the weſtern empire.

The rejection of the goſpel by the Jews, and the judgment of God upon their ingratitude, are thus repreſented in one of the parables of the New Teſtament—*they took his ſervants and intreated them ſpitefully, and ſlew them: but when the king heard thereof, he was wroth, and he ſent forth his armies and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city* *. From which caſe theſe two reflections ariſe; firſt, that when armies

* Matt. xxii. 6, 7.

take

take the field, and think they are avenging their own private quarrels, they are inflicting the juſtice of God, upon whoſe errand they are *ſent forth*, and fulfilling the ſecret determinations of his providence. Secondly, that the ſame Almighty King, who ſent forth the *Roman* armies againſt the Jews, is ſtill the Governor of all the kingdoms of the world, and hath the miniſters of his wrath in readineſs for any other people, who ſin after the ſimilitude of their tranſgreſſion. When the wickedneſs of any nation hath made it ripe for vengeance, their ſin is attended with a certain blindneſs and infatuation, which makes them aſſiſt in the work of their own deſtruction.

If the hiſtory of this kingdom were to be written with the impartiality of inſpiration, and all effects were to be deduced without error from their proper cauſes, we ſhould then ſee, how the ſame God, whoſe wonderful works are celebrated in the ſcripture, hath interpoſed on diffe-

rent occaſions to puniſh us for our pride, and deliver us from our oppreſſion: ſometimes raiſing us up to power, and wealth, and peace; at other times giving us up to be devoured by one another, when temptations from oppoſite intereſts, the ſelfiſhneſs of faction, miſcarriages in the ſtate, and perverſe interpretations in the people, have conſpired to ſet us at variance. And when we ſhall ceaſe to reap any experience from paſt evils, any of theſe cauſes may again prevail, to undermine our greatneſs, and make us a ſpectacle of miſery and ruin.

So manifeſt then is the power of God in the creation, ſo legible the interpoſition of his providence in the fate of kingdoms and nations, that the *fear of God* may well be taken for that firſt and greateſt qualification which diſtinguiſhes a reaſonable man from an inſenſible brute; and if we inſiſt upon that laſt and greateſt conſideration, that God is the judge, before whoſe tribunal we are all to give

an account of our own works; all other fear will reſolve itſelf into the fear of him, and that precept of our bleſſed Lord will be admitted in its full force—*I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him* *. But let us remember withal, that our fear of God is not intended to vex us with melancholy ſuſpicions, and torment us with horrors like thoſe of a dungeon: if our faith has it proper effect, it will only teach us the neceſſity of a reaſonable fear, and the wiſdom of a voluntary ſubjection: a fear which is attended with ſafety, and a ſubjection which leads to liberty.

Before I conclude I would ſpeak to thoſe (if there be any ſuch here preſent) who have not the fear of God. Let me warn them of one thing, which perhaps they have never conſidered; namely, that every man born into world will be poſſeſſed by ſome fear or other. He that

* Luke xii. 5.

does

does not fear God, ſhall not eſcape from the influences and effects of fear, as he flatters himſelf; for he ſhall certainly fear ſomething elſe: and to avoid a fear that would ſave his ſoul, he ſhall fall into ſome other fear that will do him no good.

In the firſt place then, he that does not fear God, ſhall fear death. The fear of God brings the love of God, and that is inſeparable from the hope of immortality: but if God is out of the queſtion, then the fear of death prevails, and being inevitable, the mind that is apprehenſive of it falls under a bondage, for which the whole world affords no remedy.

Secondly, he that fears not God, ſhall fear the world. He ſhall enquire after the opinion of the world with all that anxiety, with which the Chriſtian enquires after the will of God; and ſhall follow the ways of the world with as abject a fear as the galley ſlave works at the oar. How miſerable are thouſands of vain people, if they are either out of the

the fashion or below it. How do they dread not to be seen where the world is, and not to go where the world goes. How tamely do they renounce their own judgment in things of the utmost moment, that they may join in the publick opinion, and put their minds as well as their bodies into the fashion. If the world laughs at them, they are in the agonies of death; and will venture their lives upon any trifling occasion, in pursuit of that phantom, which the world calls honour! Will you tell me that such people are without fear? they are the slaves of fear, and are haunted by it as by an evil spirit.

But farther, he that does not fear God, shall fear poverty. The fear of God sets a man above this world, by giving him some property in the next: but if this world is all, then the most dreadful of all evils is to be without the possession of it. How many are there, who being unable to endure that poverty and labour to which

they were born, fly from their wants at the hazard of their lives; and while they ſeem to their deſperate companions to be full of mirth and madneſs, are terrified with the expectation of the miniſters of juſtice, knowing that all their ſtolen enjoyments muſt end in the halter and the gibbet.

Fear therefore is made for man, it is the univerſal portion of mortality, and in ſome ſhape or other it ſhall come upon every man living. We have it then to conſider, that he who fears unworthy objects, will find his fears increaſe till his miſery is completed. He that fears God, ſhall find his fears leſſen every day, becauſe that fear will at length be improved into a principle of *love, which caſteth out fear* *. The fear of all leſſer things will be loſt in the fear of God, and that fear itſelf will be loſt in the love of him. All fear hath ſomething of torment in it; but the ſervice of love is a ſervice of choice

* 1 John iv. 18.

and

and freedom, and when we have once attained it, we are partakers of the happineſs of heaven and the *liberty of the ſons of God*: to which bleſſed ſtate may he vouchſafe to lead us by his grace, through the merits of Chriſt our Saviour.

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, three perſons and one eternal God, be aſcribed, as is ever due, all honour, glory, power, might, majeſty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON II.

1 PET. ii. 17.

Honour the King.

THE precept in the text, which at this time deſerves the ſerious conſideration of all Chriſtian people in this kingdom, is founded on that common doctrine of the ſcripture, that kings and rulers have their authority from God, and that upon this account they are to receive *honour* from men.

To prevent all miſtakes, give me leave to obſerve in the firſt place, that it can never hurt kings and rulers to tell them ſo. Are the clergy the worſe men, when they conſider themſelves as the

ſervants of God? May they do as they pleaſe, becauſe they are the miniſters and ſtewards of a maſter, who is *no reſpecter of perſons**, and from whom, if they fail, they will *receive the greater condemnation?* That would be a ſtrange inference: and the ſame obſervation is applicable to civil governors. All power being originally inherent in God as his own property, power is a talent committed by him to man: and as the abuſe of this is more extenſive in its ill effects than the abuſe of any private endowment, it muſt be ſtrictly accounted for: therefore this doctrine can do no harm: there is no flattery in it; it is a fearful conſideration.

With reſpect to ourſelves, the conſequence is plain; that if kings rule by an authority from God, it muſt be our *duty* to give them *honour:* in treating of which, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you, that it is alſo our *wiſdom* and our *intereſt*.

* Acts x. 34. † Jam. iii. 1.

Our duty is evident from the ſcripture; which declares, that government is the *ordinance of God* *; that the ruler is the *miniſter of God* †; that the *ſword* in his hand is a ſword of divine juſtice, and that the wrath executed by it is the *wrath of God* againſt thoſe who tranſgreſs his laws. Government muſt therefore be ſupported, that the laws of God may be executed: and this is one reaſon why rebellion againſt government is an offence againſt God himſelf, becauſe its tendency is to ſet us looſe from the obſervation of his laws. That charge of *Jehoſaphat* to the judges of Iſrael is upon all others in the like authority; *take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment* ‡. And the ſame charge will apply itſelf to the people; "take heed what ye do; for your obedience is not to man, but to the Lord."

* Rom. xiii. 2. † Ibid. v. 4.
‡ 2 Chron. xix. 6.

The

The primitive Chriſtians placed civil obedience among the firſt articles of ſocial duty; and we cannot refuſe to Chriſtian princes that honour which they allowed to Heathen emperors. *I exhort*, ſaid the apoſtle, *that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty**. When the enemies of the Chriſtians had no other evil thing to ſay, they endeavoured to make them odious to the ſtate, as people of ſuſpicious characters in their politics, the friends of another king, whoſe intereſts were not conſiſtent with thoſe of the empire. But this ſcandal was confuted by that amiable ſubmiſſion and quietneſs, which they never failed to obſerve towards all that were in authority over them.

Our duty then is clear from ſuch precepts as cannot be evaded, and ſuch ex-

* 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

amples

amples as are taken from the pureſt times of the goſpel, when obedience to heathen perſecutors was a trial far more ſevere to fleſh and blood, than the practice of common loyalty to the friends and protectors of Chriſtianity.

The *wiſdom* of adhering to this duty is the next thing to be conſidered. And ſurely it muſt be the wiſdom of men enlightened by the word of God, and bleſſed with great improvements of ſcience to proceed on true principles; to walk in that light which they have, and not to emulate the darkneſs of heathens, or the confuſion and rapine of barbarians. The ſcripture teaches us, that *there is no power but of God**, that as he is the Maker of the world, all the property of the world is originally veſted in him; that kings hold of him; and the people, of their kings: and the laws recognize this doctrine, by making all property revert to the crown upon any act of treaſon or rebellion. Some embrace another

* Rom. xiii. 1.

opi-

opinion, that *there is no power but of the people*; which poſition being contrary to that of the ſcripture, they cannot both be true. The queſtion about power may eaſily be ſolved, if we do but diſtinguiſh rightly between phyſical power, and power of authority. It can never be denied, that an armed multitude is ſuperior in phyſical power to any defenceleſs man, with all his honours and titles about him, as ſmoke and aſhes, ſhot upwards from the bowels of the earth, can put out the light of the ſun: but in this there is no power of authority; and it may be turned againſt all the law and all the reaſon in the world. A gang of robbers have power over the helpleſs traveller in the foreſt; and he is obliged to ſubmit to it at the peril of his life: but ſtill there is no authority; nothing but actual force: and it matters not how large we ſuppoſe the gang to be; for its properties are no more changed by its magnitude, than the properties of a cir-

cle,

cle, which are the ſame under all dimenſions. Their power is abſolute force; and the authority by which they exerciſe it is from themſelves, againſt all the ſettlements of law, and all the rights of poſſeſſion. Allow but the force of thoſe two commandments, *Thou ſhalt do no murder*, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*, and then all this ſort of power vaniſhes.

Such is the power of the people; againſt which, therefore, every government is armed and defended; and without ſuch a defence, there could be neither property nor ſecurity in the world; nothing but violence and rapine; which are ſure to prevail, as ſoon as the people, under ſome wolviſh leaders of ſedition, attempt to take power into their own hands. All liberty then takes its flight; the liberty of acting, of ſpeaking, and perhaps of breathing, unleſs the breath be applied to blow the flames of ſedition.

My brethren, let me ſpeak freely to you upon this ſubject: *power* is a weapon of ſo ſharp an edge, that miſtakes about the nature and exerciſe of it are perilous indeed, and the bad conſequences inexpreſſible: therefore, as we value our own ſecurity, let us always diſtinguiſh between *power* and *authority*. The ſtorm hath power to blow; the waves of the ſea have power to rage; the lightning hath power to ſtrike; the fire hath power to conſume; but all this power tends only to deſtruction: the power which God giveth is *for edification, and not for deſtruction* †. It is to *preſerve* and not to *deſtroy*. He hath appointed the ſun to rule over the day, the moon and the ſtars to govern the night: all the nations of the earth enjoy light and peace and happineſs under their dominion, and their authority is confirmed by a law which cannot be broken. But if we ſhould become ſo inſenſible of this bleſſing, as to

† 2 Cor. x. 8.

argue

argue for a lawleſs power in the elements, and they were to be let looſe upon us in conſequence of our miſtake, we ſhould then diſcover, that it is the wiſdom as well as the happineſs of man, to ſubmit to *the ordinance of God.* They are *his* laws which are executed in a ſtate, and they can be executed by no authority but his own: if by an authority from the people, that would exalt the people into the place of God. Every ſtate muſt have power of life and death: but no individual hath any ſuch power over himſelf, and, conſequently, cannot give what he hath not: ſuch a power can be communicated only by that God, in whoſe hand are the lives of all mankind; to whom alone belongs that ſword of juſtice, which is born by the magiſtrate; who being the Giver, is alſo the Lord of life; and to ſuppoſe it otherwiſe, is to derive power by aſcent inſtead of deſcent; which is contrary to the order of nature in all other caſes

whatſoever. Chriſtians, who, according to the doctrine of their religion, derive all power from *above*, from whence *every good and perfect gift cometh*, go as high as they can, up to God himſelf: they who derive it from beneath, muſt go as low as they can, even down to the father of all that tumultuous rage and diſorder, which diſtinguiſhes the power of the people. When this power is ſuppoſed to include authority, it is ſo contrary to fact, to reaſon, and to revelation, that it is ſeldom taken up, but by thoſe who wiſh to raiſe a ſtorm againſt the ſtate, and encourage the waves to beat, becauſe they have hopes of plunder from the wreck. Such a power was indeed admitted and highly eſteemed by thoſe fanciful Greeks and Romans of later times, who, having departed from their ancient principles, were torn to pieces with factions, and amuſed themſelves with a vain ſearch after that philoſophers ſtone in politics, a conſtitution where

all might govern, and none be governed; till their ballancings and fluctuations produced an arbitrary government, and brought them all under the yoke of military power; the natural conſequence of ſuch experiments. When a nation is grown reſtleſs with dreams and deſpotiſm, jealous of all authority, and agitated with contentions for power, on the ground of *natural right* againſt *poſitive law*; then we may know, that *the deſolation thereof is nigh*; that it muſt either fall under the lawleſs power of ſome inteſtine faction; or be reduced to the mortification of looking on, while its lands are divided and parcelled out by a foreign force: which hath happened lately in a country of Europe, where liberty was profeſſed, whilſt the worſt ſort of tyranny was practiſed.

But it is alſo our *intereſt*, as well as our duty and wiſdom, to honour the king, and ſupport that power by which we are protected. Government was not ordain-

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ed to enſlave the world, but to preſerve the peace of ſociety, to defend the innocent from the violent and injurious, to diſtinguiſh and ſecure property, and to prevent the people from falling a prey to one another, as they never fail to do in times of rebellion, when the reſtraints of government are withdrawn, and the laws are of no force. So far as government hinders the will of one man from being a law to another, by maintaining a common rule of action for all, it is the greateſt bleſſing upon earth. There are in every nation turbulent ſpirits, who would permit no law to prevail but their own will; and, if there were nothing to hinder them, would ſet the world on fire to make themſelves conſiderable. Tribute is therefore due from every people, in return for the protection they receive: and if the government of the moſt abſolute tyrant is better than the force of a lawleſs multitude; that is, if one bad man without law is a leſs evil than an

hundred

hundred thouſand, the purchaſe (dear as it may be) is certainly worth the price to thoſe who are bleſſed with a regular eſtabliſhment.

Our common intereſt will oblige us to conſider, that the ſtrength of every government againſt its foreign enemies depends on the affection of its own natural ſubjects; ſo that they are its worſt enemies, who endeavour to leſſen that affection: for when a nation is out of humour with its governors, and careleſs of its eſtabliſhment, it is of courſe weak and defenceleſs. Great things may be done, when the people are united with one heart and mind under the perſon of their prince. How ſmall and contemptible an inſect is the bee? yet when the whole ſwarm is aſſembled, and kept together by an attachment to their leader, they are invincible; neither man nor beaſt can ſtand againſt them. Every loyal nation hath the ſame advantage: but then we are to remember, that the union, in which

which their ſtrength conſiſts, is the gift of God; who maketh men to be of one mind for their common preſervation.

Under this head of intereſt, our *honour* is concerned: for the honour of the people is involved in that of their king. We muſt judge of ſtates as we do of families. Does it not add to the reputation of any family, when there is a good underſtanding among the members of it; eſpecially if the father of it is well eſteemed, and treated with veneration by thoſe who are under him, his children and his ſervants? but it is a ſure ſign, that the family is either very wicked, or very vulgar, when a proper deference is wanting from the children to the parents: the diſgrace of their ill behaviour returns with double weight upon themſelves; according to that admonition of the ſon of *Sirach*, *Glory not in the diſhonour of thy father; for thy father's diſhonour is no glory unto thee: for the*

glory

*glory of a man is from the honour of his father**. Whatever accuſation there may be ground for, it is weak and cruel in a ſon to take it up: he ſhould leave that to the worſt enemies of the family, whoſe malice is waiting for the ruin of them all. But if the father is virtuous and honourable, then the ſon is a wretch, who can delight himſelf with the diſhonour of ſuch a parent. All this is applicable to thoſe ſubjects, whereſoever they are to be found, who ſearch for accuſations, who feed upon grievances, who ſhout with joy for any diſadvantage to their native country, and publiſh its diſtreſs to all the world, making ten times more of it than is true. If duty could not reſtrain ſuch, policy and common ſenſe ſhould be ſufficient to guard them from ſo unnatural and ridiculous a crime.

To conclude: we live in a country, where the *fear of God* and the *honour of*

* Eccleſ. iii. 10.

the king, are inculcated by the laws of the ſtate, and all the forms and doctrines of the church. Let us be thankful to God that they are ſtill preſerved to us; and that our profeſſion is ſuch, as duty, wiſdom, intereſt, and honour, will never fail to recommend. There is nothing to ſeduce us from the practice of this profeſſion, but falſe ideas of liberty, with which unthinking minds are eaſily captivated: and complaints of ſlavery and grievances, with which weak and unbridled tempers are eaſily terrified. Againſt the ill effects of theſe, give me leave to obſerve, not as a politician (for I do not aſpire to the character) but as a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt; that there is no true liberty but in the ſervice of God; and that the greateſt of all grievances is *ſin*, as fatal to ſocieties as to individuals. The only free men, properly ſo called, are they whom *the Son of God hath made free* from the bondage of ſin: the ſlavery is all on the other ſide; with

thoſe who are ſubject to their own turbulent luſts and paſſions, by which they are as effectually enſlaved as the wretch who is chained down to drudge at the oar all the days of his life: *his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs* *. Pride, vanity, avarice, envy, hatred, ambition, extravagance, and impatience; theſe are the tyrants of the *children of diſobedience* †, who, while they are under the dominion of ſuch maſters, are generally the moſt forward to hold out the temptation of liberty, and promiſe it to all their followers; but the beggar may as well promiſe crowns and ſcepters. Of ſuch men St. *Peter* gives us this character, that they *ſpeak evil of dignities*; and *while they promiſe liberty are themſelves the ſervants of corruption* ‡: tied and bound with the chain of their vices, and probably of their debts, they commence arbiters of freedom; and would

* Rom. vi. 16. † Eph. v. 6.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 10. 19.

have us believe, what great quietneſs we ſhould enjoy, and what very worthy deeds would be done by their providence.

It is a miſtake of the worſt tempers only, to ſuppoſe that liberty conſiſts in contradiction: for if that were true, then the more unreaſonable the contradiction, the greater the liberty. Every ſociety is a body, the members of which being appointed to different offices, ſhould all conſpire to the ſame end for the good of the whole. Hath the tongue no liberty, but in uttering imprecations, and calling down vengeance upon its owner? Have the hands no liberty, but when they are lifted up againſt the head, or ſtriking at the heart? It is the honour of the feet, that they can ſupport the head, by which they are animated and directed: it is the honour of the hands, that they can defend the vital parts, and repel the adverſaries of the body: this is their proper employments; and when the order of nature is obſerved, the whole

ſyſtem will be in *ſafety*; which is all the *liberty* good men will ever expect in a world ſo full of miſchief and danger.

As to grievances, it muſt be owned we have our ſhare; and no government in the world is without them; but it is the unhappineſs of this nation, to be more diſturbed with imaginary than with real evils. The ſick man may ſuffer much from his diſtemper; but he often ſuffers much more from his dreams, and throws himſelf into certain deſtruction, while he is flying from the terrors of a viſion. It is no ſuch eaſy matter for us people in a lower ſphere, eſpecially in this age of ſcandal and defamation, to know when and how our ſuperiors are in fault. The inhabitant of the valley blames the dimneſs of the air, and ſees a miſt ſpread over the hills and higher grounds; which, to thoſe in a better ſituation, appears to ariſe out of his own ſoil, and to ſettle upon the place of his own habitation. But then, have governors no faults,

faults, and are we to ſee nothing amiſs in them? Undoubtedly they have their faults, if they are mortal men, together with many difficulties, misfortunes, and mortifications from their office; under all which, it is our duty to pray for them, not to revile them: to pray that God will give them grace to amend their faults, and aſſiſt them by his good providence, in the critical affairs of their country; approving ourſelves as true Chriſtians, ſervants of God, and friends of mankind.

Let not then any Heathen principles, any viſionary notions of liberty, interpoſe, to debauch our minds with diſaffection, and thereby give occaſion to foreign enemies, whoſe envy will always be active, and is even now awake, to foment our diviſions, and to triumph in all the unhappy effects of them. Not many years are paſſed ſince we might juſtly be accounted the firſt people in the world. Nothing can ſupport us in that high

rank,

rank, but loyalty and unanimity; without which a kingdom that hath attained its utmoſt greatneſs, muſt ſoon fall with its own weight.

May therefore the King immortal and inviſible, in whoſe hand are all the nations of the earth; who, according to his good pleaſure, ſendeth counſel in peace and ſucceſs in war, give us all grace, in our ſeveral ſtations, to correct what is amiſs, to hold faſt what is good, to reſtore what is loſt, to preſerve what is ready to periſh, and to *ſee the things that belong to our peace before they are hid from our eyes.* Amen.

FINIS.

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4

A DISCOURSE ON THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION;

EXTRACTED FROM

A LATE EMINENT WRITER,

AND

APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

Χρη το αυτο φθεγγεσθαι τον ῥητορα και τον νομον. *Æsch.*
Σεβειν δε τυς κρατυντας, αρχαιος νομος. *Eurip.*

LONDON,
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PREFACE.

THE Editor of the following Diſcourſe on the Engliſh Conſtitution, having been witneſs, for ſome years paſt, to the many dangerous abſurdities, which have been publiſhed in factious News-papers, to corrupt the good people of England, and anſwer the purpoſes of a party, who have been working ſecretly and openly, in every poſſible way, to throw things into confuſion, and bring about a change of the government, thinks it high time that ſomething ſhould be offered, to ſhew the public how they are impoſed upon, and to furniſh them with a few ra-

tional principles concerning the nature of civil power, the neceſſities of ſociety, and the poſitive laws of their own country. Hence they will ſoon ſee, that no plan can be made ſenſe of, except that doctrine of allegiance againſt which they have been taught to clamour; and that *reſiſtance to civil government*, aſſerted on principle, is nothing but the extravagance and nonſenſe of deſigning writers, who want to be reſiſting every thing for their own private ends.

Suppoſe I deſire to trip up a man's heels and pick his pocket; what can I do better, to keep up my own credit, and promote my own purpoſes, than publiſh it to the world, and get it believed, if poſſible, that the *common rights of humanity* give one man a title to trip up another man's heels? And if many are perſuaded into the ſame notion, till we are either too ſtrong

or

or too cunning for oppoſition, then the property of the public is at our diſpoſal; which is the thing we had in view.

When this principle operates in low life, and raiſes a gang of thieves and houſebreakers, the principle itſelf, and the effects of it, are equally deteſtable. And it ought to be abhorred as much in other caſes: for what is every regular government but a larger ſort of houſe? What is the public revenue but the pocket of the ſtate? And are there no thieves who want to be breaking into ſuch an houſe, *while the family is aſleep?* Are there not a larger ſort of pickpockets, having the ſame appetites and principles with thoſe of the common ſort, who would plunder the ſtate as freely as the others rifle a pocket? There is indeed this difference betwixt the two claſſes; that

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the ordinary thief has but little to ſay, while his brother of higher degree turns orator, and with falſe principles and inſinuating ſpeeches, renders his profeſſion honourable and popular, till a nation is betrayed into its own ruin, and becomes a ſpectacle of miſery to other ſtates, who have been wiſe enough to provide better for their own ſecurity.

Every government ought to be upon its guard againſt ſuch men, before they have intoxicated the lower order of the people with that enthuſiaſtic notion of natural privilege againſt poſitive law, which leads directly to rebellion: and the people ſhould be better informed in due time, leſt their ignorance make them a prey to thoſe who labour ſo induſtriouſly to deceive them. To wean them from that patriotic froth, with which they have been ſo long treated, we

muſt teach them how to examine things by the plain rules of common ſenſe and poſitive law; and then they will ſee how they have been dancing after the unſubſtantial deluſions of oratory, and diſcover at laſt, that there is no liberty without law, no ſecurity without obedience.

I never met with any diſcourſe, on the ſubject of allegiance, better calculated to open their eyes than the following, and therefore would recommend the ſerious conſideration of it to all thoſe who wiſh well to their country, eſpecially at this time when ſo many wiſh ill to it. It was written by a gentleman eminently ſkilled in the Engliſh law, who had ſtudied the conſtitution with integrity of mind, and has repreſented it with very great ability. That the government of England, or any part of it, is *not legally reſiſtible*

ible with force, is the poſition he lays down; and he proves it by conſidering the people's allegiance purſuant to the poſitive law of the land, and the rights of the Engliſh monarchy, as they are by law expreſsly and undoubtedly eſtabliſhed.

A DISCOURSE

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DISCOURSE

ON THE

ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

IF it be a truth that laws (however originated) bind a people, the people of England are bound not to reſiſt with force the King, or thoſe commiſſioned by him, in any caſe, or upon any pretence whatſoever. This is to be alledged as a fundamental principle in arguing from poſitive law; and hence it flows, and is a known maxim of the Engliſh law, that the perſon of the ſovereign is not puniſhable nor coercible by force; and in the practicable forms of proceeding, tranſgreſſions againſt this law are judged upon

accuſations after the form of high treaſon. This conſequence of law, the maintainers of reſiſtance ſcarce deny; for they ſeem to go off from, and ſurmount poſitive law, ſuppoſing a power, which they call the people, ſuperior to all law, having it in their hands to reduce laws and law-makers all together; and ſo they think they argue upon ſure grounds. But this eludes the hypotheſis, which is, that the people are ſubject, and bound by the laws: for it is the ſame as ſaying that there is no law but in active force, which force is not conſtant; for ſometimes one, and ſometimes another diviſion or faction of the people proves to be ſtrongeſt; and then the laws, if there may be any, are changeable, and that, which men call right and wrong, is contingent, as a weather-cock that varies with the air: all which is ridiculous to affirm in diſcourſe. But in a nation that hath eſtabliſhed laws, all queſtions of right and wrong are referred to executive power,

in

in ſuch methods of determination as the laws have preſcribed; that is by regular proceſs before competent judges, againſt whom there is no juſt exception.

But farther, nothing can juſtify reſiſtance, but what will amount to a juſt and legal defence upon an indictment of high treaſon. If ſo, examine all the ordinary pretenſions for reſiſtance, and they will be found wanting. As firſt, the abuſe of royal power. That will not do, for it is a rule of law, that *the King can do no wrong*, becauſe all acts of the government againſt law are nullities; and ſuch have no legal effect, and juſtify no commiſſioner or agent whatſoever. Then, next, immediate violence from the perſon of the king upon a ſubject, will alſo fail; for *ſe defendendo* is no legal plea in caſe of an inferior officer, much leſs in treaſon; for the law againſt compaſſing the death of the king, hath no exception. Then, as to perſonal defects or incapacities, be it

in the higheſt degree, as madneſs, lunacy, infancy, or negligence, they afford no matter of defence in treaſon; for whatever the reſiſters ſay, the law ſays there can be no ſuch thing: for if human infirmity in ſuch caſes may be alledged, deſigning people will ever pretend it, to ſerve the turn of their ambition. In a word, the law owns no miſchief to a people in general or particular, ſo conſiderable as to be put into the ſcales againſt high treaſon. *Littleton*'s rule, *better a miſchief than an inconvenience*, ſounds oddly; but it hath this very meaning, and is very good law; and the reaſon is, there can be no law but contingent miſchiefs to particulars may, and often do happen; but the conſideration of them doth not diſable a law that hath a general view. And whoever argues againſt a law, from a ſuppoſition of ſuch miſchiefs poſſible, argues againſt all law, and for anarchy and confuſion. The law hath likewiſe another rule, which reſpects the ſame caſe;

caſe; which is *de minimis non curat lex*: and no contingent miſchiefs to particular perſons are regarded againſt the general convenience of a law, eſpecially when government, common peace, and protection depends upon it.

Theſe maxims of law are ſufficient to anſwer all the popular reaſonings of men, built upon the poſſibility of particular miſchiefs. But all reaſoning is out of doors, where there is poſitive law. None will deny the ſtatute of treaſons to be law, and in full force. And then there is a new ground upon which the caſe ſtands; ſo that if there were any former maxims, modifications, practices, or ſettlements of power contrary to that, call them covenants, contracts, fundamental principles, or whatever you pleaſe, they all ſink into and are drowned in that, as latter laws, not conſiſtent with, always repeal former. And it is well it is ſo; for there are evidences in hiſtory,

that

that before the making of that law, which the lawyers ſay is but declaratory of what the law was in truth before, there were great ſtretches, and even *læſa majeſtas* was conſtrued treaſon. A farther uſe ſhall be made of this ſtatute, which was a vaſt eaſe and ſafety to the people, in ſome reflections by and by; and in the mean time let it be obſerved, that it is not fair to alledge for anſwer, that it is not ingenuous to refer to actual proceſs, or courſe of law, and the conſequences of it; becauſe all governments will take care of themſelves, and that the laws ſhall be declared entirely on their ſide; as if this inſiſting on poſitive law were a ſubterfuge rather than an argument. But ſuch anſwer cannot be allowed to be juſt, or any colour: for will not all irregular perſons, as well as traytors, viz. felons, and other evil doers, if they may come off ſo, or if they are too ſtrong for the judge, anſwer the ſame thing? why the

one more than the other? To object power, againſt the force of poſitive law is ridiculous; for without a title to abſolute power, there can be no law at all. To temper this, therefore, in England, it is provided by law, that there be proper judges, competent to decide all queſtions of right and wrong, whether it concerns powers or intereſts, and ſuch as are put under all obligations of duty and oaths to do right according to law. But yet to enforce this reaſoning in favour of non-reſiſtance, and bring it to the height of demonſtration, let the judges immediate authority, though that be deciſive, be ſuſpended, and the caſe ſtated upon univerſal principles, and reaſons at large.

Now the terms, *non-reſiſtance* and *paſſive-obedience*, commonly uſed in this diſpute, are ſynonimous, and mean one and the ſame thing, that is, a negation of all active force, whatever the conſe-

quence

quence be. *Obedience*, in the common acceptation of the word, ſounds active, and therefore doth not well bear ſuch an adjective as *paſſive*; *non-reſiſtance* is properly *paſſive*: but common uſe hath confounded the language, and diverſe words or phraſes brought to ſignify one and the ſame thing; which is only a chooſing to ſuffer rather than obey unlawful commands. And it is very injurious to infer from ſuch a behaviour, that any power or prerogative, more than is lawful is thereby recognized; but it is one way, and an effectual one, of flying in the face of an exorbitant power, and a flat contradiction to it. Thence it is inferred, that in all civil concerns, the law is the rule of obedience, whether *active* or (as it is termed) *paſſive*; only the former belongs to lawful, and the latter to unlawful commands. And there can be no better means of aſſerting the rights of the people by law, than the diſowning unlawful commands by patient ſuffering.

ing. For which reaſon the *paſſive obedience men* are the moſt expreſs defenders of the laws againſt unbounded prerogative; as was demonſtrated by the heroic carriage of ſome of the enthroniſed clergy towards the government in the laſt century.

And here it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that inſtead of the old way of expreſſion, the laws of this kingdom or nation, his Majeſty's laws, the laws of the land, or the common law, ſome affect to uſe the word *conſtitution*; which in itſelf is no bad word, and means no other than as before. But it is commonly brought forward with a republican face, as if it meant ſomewhat excluding, or oppoſite to the monarchy, and carried an inſinuation as of a co-ordination, or coercion of the monarchy: which latter term, viz. the monarchy of England, ſtill implies, as of old, the whole law; as the crown, in all the au-

thentic books is maintained to be *fons juſtitiæ:* and it is no where to be found that the crown was one thing, and the conſtitution another; but the true conſtitution of England is the monarchy as eſtabliſhed by law. And ſo acts of parliament always refer (and anciently more expreſs than now) to the grant and ordination of the crown, with the uſual additions reſpecting the two houſes. It is dangerous to vary the language of the law; becauſe thoſe, who do not well diſtinguiſh, are thereby carried into miſtaken notions of the public.

As to precedents, they are not to be received as a rule of legal authority, but when done in quiet and regular times, approved and allowed by a conſtant uſage in ſucceeding times: for eſcapes are no precedents. There have been ſome of this ſort, witneſs the parricide of King Charles the Firſt by Cromwell, who (to go no higher) died in his bed. Which action

action hath not been allowed a warrantable precedent; but yet wicked men, if permitted to have power, would alledge and uſe it as ſuch. Undue precedents are very dangerous to liberty; for there are more and ſtronger inſtances of exorbitant prerogatives, than of republican encroachments; and the argument is as good for the one as the other. Therefore actions out of courſe, irregular, and time-ſerving, ſhould not be received as precedents deciſive, in juſtification of powers. Theſe prejudices being removed, let the caſe of obedience be ſtated upon the true frame and oeconomy of right in the world, and particularly upon the general or common law of England.

In all governments that ever were or can be, the ſupreme power, wherever it is lodged, is and muſt be uncontroulable and irreſiſtible. That is a truth included in the notion of authority or

power, for the one being granted, the other follows; as two and two are equal with four, becauſe, in the idea, they are one and the ſame. Government reſiſtible is no government, and thoſe, who ſay the contrary, are to be talked with no more than ſceptics in philoſophy, who pretend to doubt every thing, even of their own eſſence, which that very doubting demonſtrates. So that, in any ſettled ſtate, the ſupreme power, whether it reſides in one, a few, or many, may not be lawfully reſiſted, in any caſe whatſoever, by any coercive force.

In England, the ſupreme authority is by law lodged in the crown, together with the two houſes of parliament, when duly aſſembled. It is not at all material whether, or how, it might have been otherwiſe placed; though it is naturally impoſſible, that, in England, it can reſide in all the people (as hath been vainly pretended to by ſome *demotratic* cities

of

of old) the people of England being ſeparated too far aſunder, ever to be immediately joined in one action. It is enough here, that, by indubitable law and right, the crown with the ſtates of parliament, are to all intents the ſupreme authority, being what is termed the *legiſlative power*, which no ſubject ought to gainſay or reſiſt. This will ſurely be granted; for whoever pretended to gainſay or reſiſt an act of parliament, although, by natural poſſibility, it may be as iniquitous as any action of a ſingle perſon can be? Lord Coke will have it, that acts of parliament, againſt common juſtice are void, as (for inſtance) if an act were paſt for erecting a judicature to determine *parte inauditâ alterâ*. But this muſt be underſtood in conſcience and natural reaſon only, and not by the ſentence of the courts of law; elſe, the acts to veſt and diveſt private eſtates, and attainders of abſentees, and divers others, would

would run a ſhrewd riſk in Weſtminſter-hall.

It neceſſarily happens, in the actual adminiſtration of government, that by reaſon the perſons, inveſted with power, cannot act all things directly, the buſineſs is diſtributed in divers manners, according to the policy of ſeveral ſtates, to anſwer the ends of government. As for the making, judging, and executing laws for puniſhing, defending, compelling, reſiſting, and the like. And theſe ſubdivided offices, or branches of power, may be committed to ſingle perſons, or bodies of men, as laws have provided; and then all thoſe perſons or authorities become parts of the ſupreme power in their reſpective provinces. And (without regard to wrong or right) as the whole ſupreme power is, ſo are they, in their proper juriſdictions, irreſiſtible by law upon any pretence whatſoever; not allowing any man even liberty of ſelf-

pre-

preſervation. For whoever thought it lawful for one accuſed, or condemned capitally, knowing himſelf to be innocent, and groſsly abuſed in the judgment, to kill the judge or jury, or hang up the hangman to ſave his own neck? a man kills the bailiff that attacks him with force to take him; it is an offence capital, and he cannot plead *ſe defendendo*; and the law requires no proof of malice. Theſe conſiderations reflect ſtrongly upwards, upon the ſupreme power itſelf: for if the derivatives, in their offices, may not be reſiſted on any pretence, how comes the principal, or ſupreme in the execution of the whole power, to be reſiſtible by force?

But farther, in England (whatever may be elſewhere) the grand diſtinction of the ſupreme power is into the legiſlative and the executive, which latter compriſeth all actual coercion and force entirely in itſelf. As to the former, as the

law

law now ſtands (for the opinions and modes of ſpeaking, which took place in ancient times are dropt) it is moſt certain, that in real effect, the two houſes of parliament have a co-authority with the crown in making laws; or it may be more agreeable, in other words, to ſay a negative voice upon all legiſlative acts; or a little more, that is, a ſort of rogation, or power to move for, and give a ſpring to, new laws by petition, or otherwiſe, as the practice is. So as, in the main, no new law, of any ſort, can be made or diſcharged for taxing, or otherwiſe, without the formal and actual concurrence of both houſes of parliament; and either diſſenting or non-conſenting, no new law is or can be made. And this union of powers, in the making of laws, is that which, in England, is properly the ſupreme power abſolutely and to all intents. The next thing is to conſider how it is diſtributed, that is, between the crown and the two houſes;

for

for there is no power or authority which is not derived from, or under, them or one of them.

And firſt, it is not found that the two houſes, beyond this concurrent power in legiſlature, claim any proper agency whatſoever in the government. As for judicature in the lords houſe, it depends on the executive power of the crown, as other courts of juſtice do. Even private perſons have often the like propriety in juriſdiction; and it is the king's juſtice, though adminiſtered by the lords: for the writs of error, that are the foundation of the legal juriſdiction, are returnable *coram rege in parliamento*. And, as to them and the commons, the office of counſelling, petitioning, repreſenting, &c. in virtue of the very words, excludes acting: and it is what every private perſon may, and often hath a right to do. But the houſes, either ſeverally or jointly, have this capacity in the higheſt de-

gree, being the greateſt council, and moſt univerſal repreſentative that can be called or aſſembled legally in England. But yet, excepting the ſhare in the legiſlative and judicature, no acts of the houſes, or of either of them, are coercive, or will impeach any man at common law for diſobedience; and as for matters of privilege, grown into courſe, the coercion is ſtill (formally) granted by the crown, and an officer of the crown, the ſerjeant of the mace, aſſigned to execute the houſe's orders in matters of privilege. Elſe, the commons claim no judicature, not ſo much as power to adminiſter an oath; and in matters of accuſation, are petitioners to inform, as the ſenſe of the word *impetitio* is, not unlike a grand inqueſt of the whole nation. All which matters are mentioned, leſt any of theſe particulars, if omitted, might be miſtaken for an authoritative ſhare in the executive government of England.

Then

Then farther, it appears, that all the ſupreme power of the government of England, except only that which is lodged in the two houſes of parliament, is to be found in the crown. The general inference from thence is plain and obvious; but to purſue it by ſteps. There are two conditions of the Engliſh government, the one in the ſitting, and the other in the vacancy of parliament. The ſitting, as to time, place, and continuance (ſaving the effect of the ſeptennial act), is known to be in the pure direction of the crown; yet conſidering, that out of parliament, there may want means to petition or adviſe, *de arduis regni*, it is an act of conſcientious truſt and juſtice in the crown to the people in general (the ſaid law apart), to hold frequent parliaments, and much more ſo according to that law, which turns it to a ſpecific right, that the intent of it ſhould be purſued. But, in all points whatſoever, ſaving what has been alledged, the government of Eng-

land, in and out of parliament, is exactly the ſame; and none can ſay, that the crown hath leſs power of government when the parliament is ſitting than in vacation, nor more power in vacation than when ſitting.

To obviate an objection, that, in vacancy of parliaments, there is no ſupreme power *in eſſe*, becauſe no new laws can be made, without which capacity, the ſupreme power is imperfect, and, in the fullneſs of that authority, ceaſeth; let it be obſerved, that a power of poſitive legiſlature is not incident to a ſupreme power, but it is often perfect without any legiſlative power at all. As in Turkey, according to the maxims of policy there, no power upon earth can alter their laws, for the laws reſult from the religion of the country; as here no power can alter the doctrines of the goſpel. And, with them, the queſtion is never what ſhould be, but what is the law;

law; and yet there is a ſupreme power in the perſon of the emperor, as muſt be confeſſed. And the ſtrains and abuſes of miniſters there, to ſerve the turns of power, and the pleaſure of great men, againſt juſtice and their laws, is no anſwer to the conſtitution which, *in theſi*, is unalterable; and yet there is a ſupreme power. But to be more plain. If there were no laws at all in a country, but the will and pleaſure of a potentate, or ſome juncto, were really and truly the law; that binds every ſubject in conſcience to obedience. Yet even that ſupreme power is ſubject to rules, or law; for there is not, nor can there be, any power upon the face of the earth, above, or without law. For where none are declared, and there is no ſuperior to exact accounts, yet the law of natural juſtice and equity prevail. And ſo a deſpotic ruler is tied up as much to the law, in duty and conſcience, as any ſub-governor is, who, by his commiſſion, is reſtricted to rules. But this

duty

duty of all governments doth not impeach the notion of ſupreme, whether it be declared, or reſts in the mind by nature. Either is without coercion, and equally obligatory. If coercion be ſuppoſed, then the power that coerceth takes the place of ſupreme: and it is a *Pelion* upon *Oſſa* to ſet power over power; for that which hath the coercion of others, muſt be incoercible itſelf. And ſuppoſing that, and no obligation but conſcience and duty in the ſupreme power, where is the difference, whether it be guided by poſitive and declared law, or by natural juſtice? All that can be ſaid is, that laws aſſiſt the weak capacities of ſome men in power, by telling them what ought, and what ought not to be done, which their own natural ſkill might not perhaps have found out. Though I may ſay there is ſcarce a ſincere perſon in the world, whom the golden rule, *do as you would be done by*, will not direct: ſo it is corrupt will, and not want of under-

derſtanding, which often miſleads men; and takes place againſt poſitive law, as well as againſt natural juſtice. So that it returns every way upon the conſcience of powers; for if we admit a ſuperior coercion, or in the common phraſe, a liberty (with power) to reſiſt, even that may be exerciſed with as bad a conſcience as the other; and then what is got by the bargain?

But it is a moſt pernicious error to diſcharge the ſupreme power of the obligation to juſtice for conſcience ſake, as they do, who ſay acts of the ſupreme power, or (in the forenſical ſtyle) legiſlative acts, or acts of parliament, are always juſt, and though made in partial caſes, are not injurious becauſe abſolute. For a legiſlative or ſupreme power, wherever it reſides, is as much bound to common juſtice and equity, in every public act, as a private man is obliged to common truſt and honeſty. And he that ſays ſuch

powers do no injury, though their act is (as in poſſibility it may be) moſt unjuſt and wicked, becauſe they cannot be contradicted, muſt, at the ſame time, allow that a private man who breaks a ſecret truſt, or kills his father, there being no evidence to check or convict him, is a very honeſt man, and hath done no wrong. Wherefore, if the conſciences of men were not ſome ſecurity in the general among promiſcuous ſocieties, and in the ordinary dealings of the world; the caſes of innocent men, who are moſt apt to rely on it, were very hard. But I dare ſay, that however open differences make a noiſe, there is in the world, as bad as it is, more juſtice among men, upon account of the common obligation of equity and conſcience, than from all the proceſs of law and coercion of the magiſtrate all the world over. And theſe men, who argue ſo ſtrongly againſt all truſt, eſpecially that lodged in governors, which is and will be a pure truſt as long

as the world ſtands, only ſhew how little of that principle is to be found in themſelves, which they think wholly wanting in others. It is moſt certain that numbers of men, whenever a public truſt is repoſed in them, may (I wiſh I could not as truly ſay ſometimes do) break all the commandments of God, as well of the firſt as ſecond table, as any private perſons againſt whom they are choſe to be a guard. And to conclude: the having power is ſo far from an excuſe for doing bad things, that it aggravates them; as when dogs, that are to keep, worry the ſheep. A common thief has more to ſay for himſelf, than an oppreſſor or murderer by power, who cannot be coerced. All theſe matters laid together make it plain, that whether there be a legiſlative power *in eſſe* or not, there is always a ſupreme power which commands all the forces of the ſtate, and is by law, as well in the ab-

ſence as in the preſence of the legiſlative, irreſiſtible with force; and that will fall out to be the caſe of the crown of England.

Theſe premiſes will moſt clearly appear, if we conſider that the legiſlature, whereof the two houſes partake, is of ſuch a nature, that reſiſtance with force doth not take place againſt it. For laws themſelves are but the voice or words of power, and have authority to create a duty, but no active force to compel obedience, or to which reſiſtance can be applied; for who can offer to reſiſt a mere ſound? When the executive power comes forward with a ſtrong hand, then there is ſomewhat to reſiſt, but not elſe. Therefore reſiſtance or obedience, active or paſſive, relate wholly to the executive power, without which the legiſlative is weak and ineffectual. Now all the reſt of the ſupreme power of the government

of

of England (except only legiſlature, or the *non-reſiſtible* part, wherein only the two houſes are ſharers) being owned to reſide in the crown, it follows that the ſame neceſſity, which makes any power irreſiſtible, makes the crown of England irreſiſtible with force, upon any pretence whatſoever; which conſequence is ſo plain, that it need not be inforced with varying the expreſſions, or with repetitions. And then upon the ſame account, it follows that, as concerning the *paſſive-obedience* or *non-reſiſtance* of the ſubject with active force (legiſlature always excepted, as not concerned in the queſtion) the monarchy of England is the ſupreme power, and ought not to be oppoſed with force againſt its force in any caſe, nor upon any pretence; ſuch oppoſition being a crime the laws ſtyle treaſon or rebellion; for which the ſame laws allow no manner of juſtification.

As to thoſe nice arguers for reſiſtance, who perpetually harp upon the abuſe of power, and the ſad effects of it, which they would prevent or cure by reſiſtance, they are eaſily anſwered. The matter of right and wrong is indeed founded in nature, and in that quality, a law itſelf, however regularly enacted, may be (as before hinted) abominable and wicked: that is, the very legiſlative power, were it the majority of the people (which is not poſſible), or in ſelect hands, as it ordinarily is, may tyrannize, and offend againſt all the rules of natural juſtice, common ſenſe, and equity; for which that power is to anſwer, as having tranſgreſſed and broke their truſt: but it is to God only; for elſe the correctors of them become at that inſtant the legiſlative power, and then we are where we were before. Now there is a diſtinction to be made here, which is between *misfortune* and *injury*. For if a ſubject is a ſufferer under

under a general, however wicked, law, he is unfortunate, but not injured; becauſe he can claim no more than the common benefit of the laws of his country. And having, in due form, ſtood the judgment of the law, he can aſk no more; his appeal muſt be above; there is no power on earth to relieve him. This was the caſe of Socrates, and we have his example, as well as reaſonings, in the report of his caſe, to confirm what is here maintained. In ſhort, it is abſolutely impoſſible ſo to order affairs, but that whoever hath power to do right, hath of conſequence, power to do wrong. And if reſiſtance be introduced upon a ſuppoſal (which may be made no leſs arbitrarily and inſincerely than any act of power can be, and commonly is ſo) of the undue and inſincere uſe of regular powers, it is declaring plainly, that there can be no government nor diſtributive juſtice at all in the world.

And

And to complete the argument, the poſitive law, or ſtatute (which was mentioned before, but not ſpecified as to one article) is abſolutely deciſive of the queſtion, in the very terms. It is the article in the ſtatute of 25 Edward III. which makes it high treaſon to levy war. This is an expreſſion ſo general, that it forbids reſiſtance upon any pretence; for the government is armed, and if oppoſed at all, muſt be oppoſed by arms, that is in array of war, or (as they ſay) *more guerrino*. And whatever the cauſe is, tho' not directed, perhaps, againſt the King, but to pull down bad houſes, deſtroy engine looms, and the like popular, and (as they think) meritorious purpoſes, it is ſolemnly adjudged to be treaſon, as levying war within this article. So that reſiſtance with force, which muſt be by levying war, is prohibited on pain of death by a poſitive law; which puts the matter paſt all dipute.

As to the objection, that *paſſive obedience* or *non-reſiſtance* is a ſlaviſh and degenerate principle, it is a miſtake; ſo far from it, it is a principle of liberty and ſecurity. For can any man be free, and ſafe from the outrages of oppreſſive, potent neighbours, who doth not live under a power ſufficient to keep the peace, and protect him? The ſovereign power is high and remote, and commonly the intereſt of it is to be a friend to the *community*. If the abuſes, when there are any, fall hard upon the great men who are near it, they are compenſated in the ſhare that devolves among them; with which they would be more ready to oppreſs their inferiors, if ſomebody were not above them to give protection and redreſs. And if the luſts and diſorders, ſometimes incident to power, bring evil upon the people, it is ſcarce ever ſo great, but they are amply compenſated by the ordinary peace and protection they enjoy.

There

There is much more danger of oppreſſion to a common man from bad neighbours, private enemies, and wrong doers, as alſo from the cabals at the next door, than from the potency of the government, though it ſhould happen to be none of the beſt. And it is found that the worſt governments are thoſe that have moſt heads and hands; for the abuſes of ſuch are more diffuſed, and turn to a more general oppreſſion.

In regard to the queſtions put by ſome men—As, can it be imagined a nation ever ſubmitted to be tyrannized over by one man? Or is it fit that one man ſhould have it in his power to make all the reſt miſerable? However impertinent theſe queſtions are to the cauſe, in a juſt way of reaſoning, yet they may be anſwered by other queſtions. As, can it be believed, that a people were ever willing, or conſented, that thieves, malefactors,

lefactors, and cheats, every where in plenty, ſhould have liberty to ravage and deſtroy at their pleaſure? And will not a people chooſe rather to be ſubject to one man's pleaſure, upon a fair underſtanding, who is potent and can protect them, than be left at large to fight it out continually, in clans and combinations to gain a little defence and ſafety? They muſt anſwer, if any thing, right: but then, ſay they, you may change, and have a better government. True, you may change, but ſeldom comes a better. If they ſay it is better the government be weak and precarious, becauſe, for fear of themſelves they will do no injury. No, nor yet (through the ſame fear) hinder others from doing injury, which is worſt of all; and who lives that has not had experience of this? But not to refine farther, let it be only obſerved, that the force of the argument of the reſiſters lies in magnifying the evils of bad government, and they will have thoſe evils taken in the utmoſt extremity, though

but naturally poſſible, and in no ſort probable, if ever known to have happened in the world. But they ſay nothing of the evils that attend the want of power in a government, which make a ſharper catalogue by much than the other; and they are ſuch as never fail to happen, and, what is worſe, affect the whole people wherever they do happen; as all muſt know by experience, when the nerves of government have been relaxed. No political ſtate is perfect, and the leaſt evil is the beſt. Public good, ſo much in theſe men's mouths, is a cloak which hypocrites always wear, and if you turn it up a little, the naſty ſelf-intereſt, injuſtice, and oppreſſion will appear, that lie lurking under it. Thoſe, who have been more than once burnt, which is the caſe of the Engliſh nation, will (it is to be hoped) watch well ſuch fuel. The hardeſt caſe of the juſteſt government is, that they are forced to deceive to make people happy; that is, to be quiet, or to take what is good for them. Give

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me the private man that dares be honeſt, and the government that dares do juſtice. Men who live in peace and ſafety, which are the ordinary fruits of government, are like men in health; then they are not contented, but long for preferment, honour, luxury, and pleaſures: but when they fall under diſeaſes, and are in pain, then they would quit all for pure health and eaſe.

It is not foreign to theſe ſpeculations, to put in a word in behalf of the Engliſh monarchy and government, which hath many advantages to the people, but none more glorious than this; *that all acts of the crown, againſt law, are mere nullities*; and all, who act under them, are obnoxious to the law, and ſo far from being protected, that they may be queſtioned and puniſhed by that very power, againſt whom its own command is no defence or juſtification. And for this cauſe, all authentic commands are put in

writing, or ſealed, or no perſon, ſerved with ſuch command, can be proſecuted for contempt in not obeying. For the party may know by that, whether it be a legal command, which requires active obedience, or not; and then by whoſe fault it is ſent forth, whereby the proper officer may be brought to anſwer for it. This conſtitution never was heard of in any ſtate but the Engliſh, nor is it extant in force under any other government upon earth: ſo little danger is there of exceſſes from the Engliſh monarchy. But if I were debarred this patriarchal privilege, and had my lot in times of diſorder, and were put upon a choice of the two, I would certainly, upon the competition, rather yield to one abſolute potentate, *tale quale*, who had power ſufficient to govern and protect, than to live in perpetual fear and proper guard againſt injury and oppreſſion from the moſt cruel of all ſorts, that is (not ſuperiors ſo much as) equals, or rather inferiors. It is an

obſervation, which the general experience of ages may vouch, *viz.* that the calamities, which have fallen upon the people of England from the ſtate of the government, have been incomparably more by reaſon of too little, than of too much power exerciſed by the kings; and that by how much nearer the ſtate hath warped towards what ſome call a commonwealth, by ſo much hath tyranny got ground, and the true liberty of the people ſunk down; whereof great part never emerged to them, no not after the former government hath been happily reſtored.

But to conclude with doing right to the cauſe, I muſt needs ſay, that it is not a juſt balance of intereſt which always regulates the good or evil conſequences of power; but the mere ſhew, name, opinion, and prejudice, or rather humour of the people go a great way in it. For it may be obſerved, that it is not enough to do men good, but they muſt think

think and accept of it as ſuch, and alſo truſt their government; or elſe, whatever the truth is, they will not flouriſh in numbers and increaſe of trade and wealth. Therefore it is a moſt wicked practice of the faction, to labour, as they do, to create miſunderſtandings and diſtruſt in the people of their government, which muſt needs tend to the deſtruction of their welfare and increaſe. Now, to conſider the caſe rightly, and make a judgment from the extremes, it is almoſt impoſſible, that proſperity, by increaſe of people and wealth, ſhould happen under the great *Aſiatic* monarchies (although now, as the world tranſcends in wickedneſs, there can be no other than abſolute government there); for the people cannot have reaſon to think themſelves ſafe and ſecure in the advances they make, and, being careleſs of that, are ambitious of nothing but power to tyrannize over others, as they themſelves are tyrannized over by their ſuperiors; they think of no

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proſperity but through oppreſſion; and ſo, by common conſent, all are ſlaves. And this wolviſh humour is ſuch, that the governments think their ſecurity lies in the deſtruction and depopulation of provinces. And, to ſay truth, all defection from common honeſty and truth, which ſhould tie people reaſonably together, not only tends to, but makes abſolute government neceſſary. Hence, from the very name of monarchy, men derive a prejudice, as if no ſecurity for life or eſtate were had under it; when it may be made appear, that in monarchic countries, which have laws of government, as well as of property, ſuch as we call mixt, there is more real ſecurity than is to be found elſewhere, although there may be much more pretenſion to it. To inſtance in the pretended republics of Venice and Holland; the former is a peſtilent ariſtocracy of the worſt ſort, that is, of a multitude, under which the community of the people have no law or juſtice

tice on their ſide, but as they gain the protection of one great man againſt another. And the other is Holland, which hath no popular elections (eſſential to a republic), but burgomaſters fill vacancies by a majority of themſelves; and ſo a faction is always prevalent, both in the towns of which the combination conſiſts, and in the ſtadthouſe, whereby the lands of the countries all about are made direct ſlaviſh, and ſometimes taxed ſo as not be worth owning; and all to ſave the citizens purſes; and all preferments and ſucceſſion run in a match-making channel and family relation; and yet the name of republics holds theſe in credit, and the people are pleaſed, increaſe and thrive. But whatever becomes of the humour and fancies of people, it is certain, that for the true utility of government, when ſedition is not permitted to grow too much upon it, the government of England is the ſafeſt and beſt government in the world.

FINIS.

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PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST THE

PUBLICATIONS

DISPERSED BY

MODERN SOCINIANS.

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PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST THE

PUBLICATIONS

DISPERSED BY

MODERN SOCINIANS:

In which the IMPIETY and ABSURDITY of their PRINCIPLES are clearly ſhewn.

Addreſſed by a COUNTRY-CLERGYMAN to his PARISHIONERS.

Satan hath deſired to have you. Luke xxii. 31.

LONDON,
Printed for J. and F. RIVINGTON, in St. Paul's Church Yard; and G. ROBINSON, in Paternoſter-Row. 1774.

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PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST

SOCINIANISM.

My dear Brethren,

YOU live in an age and in a country, in which moſt men think they have a right to do and ſay juſt what they pleaſe. Thus far, indeed, we are ſtill under the protection of the law, that one man cannot ſhoot another through the head without being hanged for it; unleſs he does it upon a principle of honour. But he may aſperſe characters, accuſe the innocent, put darkneſs for light and light for darkneſs, blaſpheme God, diſhonour the king, and expoſe the nakedneſs of his

country, without being called to any account.

Before the flood of Noah, the earth was filled with violence, God was deſpiſed, all goodneſs was trampled under foot, and they were too far gone to take any warning. The Goſpel tells us it ſhall be ſo again: and all good people, whoſe brains are not turned with empty ſounds, can plainly ſee, that the glorious liberty of theſe latter days will be the grand inſtrument in bringing the new world up to that degree of corruption which deſtroyed the old.

That the influence of Chriſtianity, which is now ſo much decayed, may be leſs and leſs every day, books and pamphlets are induſtriouſly handed about among the common people, to turn away their hearts from Chriſtian Truth to the fables of infidelity. I do not mean that theſe publications abound with oaths, curſes, and obſcenity, though the preſs is daily delivered of them alſo; but that they

they give God the lie in all the doctrines by which our Holy Religion is diſtinguiſhed; and if they ſhould be attended to and received, muſt provoke Him to tranſplant the Chriſtian Faith to ſome other quarter of the earth, which has not ſo much neglected his goodneſs.

Some may promiſe themſelves, that when this happens, a ſtate of perfect freedom will take place; but let them know, that how freely ſoever men may offend againſt one another, God is not to be intimidated by the claims of licentiouſneſs. The God of Chriſtians is and will be the Ruler of the World, whether libertines conſent to his dominion or not; and they may aſſure themſelves, that the departure of the Chriſtian religion will be no peaceable event. When the Founder of our Faith expired, the heavens were darkened, the earth ſhook, and the minds of men were troubled and confounded. When God departed from the Jewiſh nation, diſcord, peſtilence and famine, all

the horrors of war, and all the miſeries of ſedition and ſlavery ſucceeded. The deſtruction of the world by the flood, the burning of *Sodom*, the captivity of *Jeruſalem*, and other like viſitations, are to be underſtood as ſo many warnings of that fate which all apoſtates will meet with in another world, and as examples of what will moſt probably befall them in this world.

It has been a method conſtantly obſerved by Divine Providence to puniſh national ſin with national miſery. This nation is not without its miſeries, both many and grievous, upon all ranks of people: and what is worſe, they are like the miſeries of a man under a mortification, of which he is not ſenſible. The evils ſo magnified and trumpeted up by the ſeditious, are the ſmalleſt evils of the time. He that cannot ſee how they have all ariſen, both ſmall and great, from the decay of Chriſtianity amongſt us, wants to have his eyes opened.

My

My brethren, I am one of thoſe who, with God's help, would willingly make a ſtand againſt that torrent of hereſy and impiety, which threatens to break in upon us: but there is no chance of doing this to any purpoſe, unleſs we can remove one fatal miſtake, which moſt ignorant people now labour under, and of which the enemies of our faith never fail to take advantage. The miſtake is this; that Chriſtians may reckon themſelves ſecure of the favour of God, if they are not guilty of cheating, whoring, drinking, robbing, and murdering. This is the error of the ignorant; and the artful flatter them in it, telling them, that if they do but lead what they call good lives, articles of faith are but matters of opinion, and therefore they need not be nice about their creed. To make this plauſible notion the more agreeable, one of our Poets (who was never troubled with much religion) has put it into rhyme;

For modes of faith let ſenſeleſs zealots fight,
His can't be wrong, whoſe life is in the right.

But a right life can no more grow upon a wrong faith, than grapes can grow upon thiſtles. This is true for more reaſons than one; but chiefly, becauſe the worſt ſort of wickedneſs is the wickedneſs of the mind againſt God: upon which I ſhall beg leave to offer you ſome conſiderations in the following chapter.

CHAP. I.

Of Spiritual Wickedneſs.

THE Chriſtian life comprehends two great branches of duty; the firſt towards God, the ſecond towards our neighbour. God has an undoubted claim to the firſt place; our neighbour has the next; and we are to love him, and help him, out of a ſenſe of our duty to God, who hath commanded us ſo to do. But

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if I ſtumble in the beginning of my duty, and offend againſt God himſelf, what reaſon have I to expect his favour for what I do to any body elſe? Will little paltry acts of kindneſs toward a fellow-ſubject excuſe me for an act of rebellion againſt my prince, or ſtop the execution of a ſtatute againſt treaſon? What was the offence which brought death into the world? Not an offence againſt ſociety; for there was none; but only againſt a poſitive command of God. It was revealed that the forbidden tree would have a deadly effect. This revelation was diſputed: the truth of God was called in queſtion; the luſt of pride prevailed, and the ſentence of death followed. Therefore if Adam deſtroyed the whole world by ſinning againſt the truth of God, certainly any ſingle man may deſtroy himſelf by the ſame means; though he ſhould give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned for the good of ſociety.

There

There is another ſhort way of expoſing the ſame miſtake. Conſider the character of the devil: he is no member of ſociety; and being *a ſpirit* cannot commit the ſins of the body. He is no glutton, no drunkard, no miſer, no adulterer; his wickedneſs is all of a ſpiritual kind; or, in other words, it is the wickedneſs not of the body but of the ſpirit. It conſiſts in oppoſing the wiſdom of God, perverting his word, miſrepreſenting his juſtice, deſpiſing his incarnation, ſuggeſting evil thoughts to men, promoting hereſies, and dividing the church of Chriſt: in a word, it is the buſineſs of the apoſtate ſpirit to counterwork the ways of the Divine Spirit, by all the efforts of ſubtilty, falſehood, pride, malice, and contradiction. Therefore he who oppoſes God as the devil doth, is the diſciple and miniſter of the devil; and if he does the ſame work, what can be expected but that he will receive the ſame wages? The character moſt acceptable to the devil, becauſe the fitteſt

fitteſt for his purpoſes, is that which moſt nearly reſembles his own: and for the forming of ſuch a character he employs the moſt refined of all his temptations. The ſtupid ſot, the profane ſwearer, and the rotten debauchee, are low-lived examples of vice; the meaneſt of the devil's ſcholars. Beſides, theſe are ſometimes known to be weary of his counſel, and to forſake his party. But the ſpeculative and philoſophical ſinner is a man of figure, whoſe pride will never admit of his reformation. The Scribes and Phariſees, men conceited of their learning, found ways of eluding the divine law; they therefore adhered to the intereſts of Satan, and were immoveable in their errors; while the publican was wrought upon to renounce his extortion, and the harlot waſhed away her ſtains with the tears of repentance. The extortioner is drawn away by the love of money which anſwereth all things; and

the harlot is frequently the victim of treachery, poverty, and a bad education: but the ſinner who errs upon principle, hath ſet himſelf in oppoſition to the will of God. Meaner ſinners tranſgreſs the law, but he judges it: and where pride twiſts itſelf with error, a man ſinks with a weight at his heels, which will be ſure never to let him riſe any more.

What are we then to think, but that he who is moſt like the devil in his wickedneſs, is moſt hateful to God? And this is the caſe with the ſpiritual ſeducer. Hence the Goſpel gives us warning, that the *wiſdom of this world* is *fooliſhneſs with God*; that every *thought* is to be *brought into captivity*; that *imaginations* are to be *caſt down*; that Satan hath his *depths*, his *myſteries of iniquity*, as well as his more groſs and ſhallow deceits; that he has agents to recommend his principles, *falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt*, and ſolemnly

ſolemnly preaching down the Goſpel under the outward profeſſion of preaching it up in a purer manner.

Theſe, my brethren, are dangers, of which few Chriſtians are now aware; and therefore the work of every deceiver, who underſtands his trade, is more eaſy and more ſucceſsful than it uſed to be. The cant of *liberty of Conſcience*, and the *authority of private judgment*, both of which are extended to an unlimited freedom of opinion againſt all that is ſacred, have been repeated in people's ears till they are intoxicated with the ſounds, and can ſee no criminals left in the nation but ſuch as are condemned at the *Old Bailey*. When an highway robber, or houſe-breaker is convicted, ſentence is preſently paſſed againſt him; he makes his dying ſpeech, the hangman does his office, and there is an end of him. Nobody arraigns the law of cruelty, the judges of partiality, or the jury of perſecution. But when the blaſpheming *Socinian* goes a-

bout to raiſe diviſions in the church, and to rob Chriſtians of their faith, the moſt valuable property they have upon earth, an outcry is raiſed if you offer to interrupt him. Popery perſecutes the truth; therefore proteſtant blaſphemy muſt eſcape without cenſure: than which there can be no greater ſcandal to the proteſtant profeſſion, nor greater matter of triumph to the papiſts; who wiſh to ſee all proteſtants go a round-about way through blaſphemy into popery.

Upon the Chriſtian plan then, however bad carnal wickedneſs may be, ſpiritual wickedneſs is worſe: for the mind is better than the body in itſelf, and conſequently, according to an eſtabliſhed proverb, worſe in its corruption. Therefore no obedience can be acceptable to God without that which is the beſt of all, the obedience of the underſtanding; no courage is comparable to that which contends earneſtly for the faith delivered to the ſaints; no temperance is like that which

refrains

refrains from high thoughts and presumptuous imaginations. Let us then be no longer ſtunned with the affected *good lives* of ſuch as fail in this ſort of obedience, and whoſe minds are at variance with the revealed wiſdom of God: for there is wickedneſs blacker than that of common immorality; and moral virtues are ſomething, or nothing, or worſe than nothing, according to the principles from which they proceed. If a man who has made a practice of being drunk every day of his life, ſhould keep himſelf ſober for one day, only that he may have an opportunity of picking his neighbour's pocket, or over-reaching him in a bargain; of what value is ſuch ſobriety? Is it not worſe than his drunkenneſs? for his drunkenneſs is beaſtly, and that is the worſt you can ſay of it, but his ſobriety is diabolical. You may apply this to other caſes: and let me tell you, that if ſpiritual wickedneſs were but rightly underſtood, as it ſubſiſts in the devil the original

ginal of it all, men could never be cheated as they now are with the plauſible ſpeeches of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive them: and I very believe one good diſcourſe upon the character of Satan, ſtripping that wolf of his philoſopher's coat, and his ſheep's clothing, would have more effect toward keeping many people ſteady to the truth, than an hundred treatiſes upon particular points of doctrine. And this leads me naturally to ſhew you what arts are practiſed, to propagate hereſy and infidelity.

CHAP. II.

Of the Method of thoſe who ſpread falſe Doctrine.

AS there were falſe prophets againſt the law of Moſes, ſo we are told there ſhall be falſe prophets againſt the Goſpel: and as the dignity and value of our law is above that of the Jews, we

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are bound to look more ſharply after thoſe who would corrupt it. The church never was, nor ever will be without them; and the apoſtle informs us, that as the church grows older they ſhall *wax worſe and worſe*. Our Bleſſed Maſter has given us one rule for detecting them, which will ſeldom fail us: *Beware* (ſays he) *of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheep's clothing*. Here their outward appearance is deſcribed: they make their approach to you, not as wolves, but as ſheep; not as infidels, but as Chriſtians; not as falſe prophets, but as the only true prophets you ever met with. Indeed, my brethren, it is very weak and childiſh to imagine that nothing is ſin but that which calls itſelf ſo. Does not every bad thing give itſelf a good name? The pirate ſays he goes *upon the account*; the ſmuggler calls himſelf a *fair trader*; the harlot gets her living in *an honeſt way*; the quaker calls his quakeriſm the *true Chriſtian divinity*; *Chubb* calls his Chriſtianity without its

credenda,

credenda, the *true Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*; and the Jeſuit does little hurt in *England*, till he calls himſelf *a true proteſtant*. When a ſeducer makes an attempt upon your faith, you muſt not expect that he will give you notice of his intention at the market-croſs, like a common cryer, and ſay, "Now, good people, look to "yourſelves, for I am about to deny all "the doctrines of the Goſpel, and am "perſuaded I can make a better religion "than that of the Bible." If he ſhould make ſuch a groſs miſtake as this, his maſter would either diſcard him as a traitor, or give him up as an inſtrument unfit for all the purpoſes of ſeduction. Satan himſelf, when engaged in the ſublimeſt of his undertakings, never works in the odious character of Satan, but begins with transforming himſelf into an *Angel of Light*: and his aſſiſtants, inſtead of avowing their wickedneſs, are generally more pompous and plauſible in their profeſſions than other men. Conſcience,

Conſcience, Reaſon, Charity, Piety, Purity, and a Love of Truth, are all their own, and others are no better than pretenders. Therefore when a falſe teacher makes an attempt upon your faith, you may expect him to accoſt you in words to this Effect — " *My Chriſtian Brethren,* I " am a ſincere *Lover of the Goſpel,* and hav- " ing the *deepeſt concern for its honour,* I " would guard you againſt thoſe who *decry* " *human Reaſon,* and forbid you to make " uſe of it, that they may obtrude ſuch " doctrines as are agreeable neither *to Rea-* " *ſon nor the Word of God.* Religion is " the *moſt valuable inheritance of the hu-* " *man race*; and if *by God's Bleſſing* I can " bring you to entertain *the ſame views of* " *it with myſelf, we ſhall rejoice together.* " Though Popery is reformed, yet many " errors ſtill remain, which by the uſe of " Reaſon may be driven out. Reaſon is the " Gift of God, and ſo is the Scripture, " and they cannot be contrary to one an- " other. There is *a ſpirit of cenſorioufneſs*

" which many profeſſing Chriſtians in-
" dulge with too little reſtraint: but the
" true Chriſtian beareth all things. My
" Brethren, be not moved with the raſh
" cenſures and reproaches of men; if you
" will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, you muſt
" ſuffer perſecution." Theſe expreſſions are taken from a ſmall canting *Socinian* Tract, ſold for ONE PENNY, and diſperſed in great numbers, to poiſon the minds of the common people. You would take the author for a ſincere believer of the Holy Scripture, perfect in his Charity, and fortified with the Spirit of a Martyr. But be not deceived: all is not gold that glitters. Let me therefore beg your attention while I make ſome remarks on theſe extracts, to ſhew you that his attempts are quite contrary to his declarations, and his doctrines ſubverſive of the whole plan of Chriſtianity: and then you will ſee what a vaſt difference there is between the ſound of words and the ſenſe of them.

In

In the firſt place then, all ſenſible people reckon it a very ſuſpicious circumſtance, when a man opens a cauſe with a panegyric upon *himſelf*. If a ſtranger, when you enter his ſhop, were to ſalute you with the praiſes of his own honeſty, his ſtrict regard to the honour of trade, and his love to all his cuſtomers, paſt, preſent, and to come, you would look upon all this as a bait, and be certain he intended to cheat you. So our *Socinian* pamphleteer in his title calls himſelf a *Lover of the Goſpel*: he dare not leave you to find this out by his book; but hopes you will be blinded toward the miſchief of it by a good opinion of his character, before you enter upon it. He profeſſes the *deepeſt concern for the honour of the Goſpel*; but as he denies all its ſaving doctrines, who can take his word? Even though he ſhould confirm it with an hundred oaths?

Then he exhorts you to make uſe of your own Reaſon; that is, to ſee things with your own eyes, and not be impoſed

upon by what you are taught: which is very excellent advice; but he has not followed it himſelf, neither does he intend that you ſhould follow it. His notions are borrowed from *Socinus*, and his Deiſtical followers, particularly from *Chubb* the tallow-chandler, whoſe writings contain all the ſecrets of the preſent reforming Divinity. So that he cannot juſtly pretend to the merit of having uſed his own Reaſon. And as to you, he writes his pamphlet with the hope of *bringing you to entertain the ſame views of Chriſtianity with himſelf*: therefore his compliments to *your Reaſon* are nothing but the flattery of one who is all the while ſupplanting your Reaſon, in order to make way for his own particular notions againſt Chriſtianity. For this purpoſe he helps you to ſome interpretations of texts of Scripture, ſo very much out of the way, that your own Reaſon would never have hit upon them; neither would his, if he had not been told of them.

The

The imperfection of the Reformation is a topic much declaimed upon of late; and this author, in concert with the Divines of the Feathers Tavern, is of opinion, that, though Popery is gone, many errors are ſtill remaining. In anſwer to which, we have this to ſay for our Divines at the Reformation, that we are ſure they believed the Scripture; and their writings ſhew that they underſtood it: but as to the Reformers of this preſent time, we are not ſure they do either the one or the other. The Lovers of the Goſpel in Luther's days took off the ſuperſtitious dreſs of Chriſtianity, but left the body of it ſecure. If we go to work now, we muſt reform it to the bone; and even then ſome nice judges may be offended with the ſkeleton, and never reſt till they have ſet up the Idol of Heatheniſm; as ſome attempted to do about fifty years ago; and their officiating miniſter was Mr. *John Toland*, who compoſed a form of divine ſervice to the *Infinite and Eternal Univerſe*.

The

The author proceeds to assure us, that as Reason and the Scripture are each of them *the Gift of God, they cannot be contrary to one another*. Right Reason (when we have found out what that is) cannot possibly be contrary to the Scripture, because the Scripture contains the Reason of God; but the Reason of any particular Man may be very contrary to it. So that we want a distinction here: for when we speak of Reason in general terms, every man makes himself the compliment to think that *his* Reason is the thing intended. But it is one thing to have the Gift of Reason as an human creature, and another thing to have the right use of it. The first we have by Nature; the second is the work of Grace: and if a writer puts one of these for the other, or imagines them to be the same thing, he will soon talk very absurdly. Voltaire has the Gift of Reason; but he has not the gift of using it; for on every subject that relates to Christianity, he reasons like an idiot; yet with a mischievous

vein

vein of wit, which eaſily catches people of corrupt minds. The philoſophizing Greeks, to whom *Chriſt crucified* was *fooliſhneſs*, had their Reaſon like other men; but education had perverted it, and rendered it contradictory to the Reaſon of God; ſo that it was of no uſe to them in divine ſubjects, but rather an hindrance. A ſimilar train of education will have juſt the ſame effect now: and you muſt not expect, that any perſon who abuſes his Reaſon, will confeſs that he does ſo. He will go on to boaſt of Reaſon in general, and make no exceptions to the diſadvantage of his own Reaſon in particular. When human Reaſon ſees things as the wiſdom of God ſees them, then it performs its proper office: but when it ſees them otherwiſe, then it takes the name of Philoſophy, and turns into fooliſhneſs, like the boaſted Reaſon of the Greeks, who *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, became fools*. The world has always been full enough of this ſort of Reaſon. How common is

it

it for people to talk about conſcience; and yet how few there are who conſider what it is: for conſcience is an agreement or coincidence of the judgment of man with the judgment of God. When conſcience condemns what God approves, or approves what God condemns; it is no longer conſcience, but conceit and deluſion. The Conſcience of the Quaker aſſures him that it is needleſs to be baptized; and the conſcience of the Socinian ſcruples the Worſhip of the Church of *England* as Idolatry; but there is no more reaſon in the one or the other, than in that conſcience of the Muſſulmen which ſends them two thouſand miles on a pilgrimage to the tomb of their falſe prophet. Our author has been very free in delivering his opinion about Reaſon: but what Reaſon is, and what is the proper uſe of it; how it may be improved and ſtrengthened, and how it may be ſo debauched as to judge falſely of every thing; are queſtions for which he ſeems very much unprepared.

It will be worth our while to enquire, why he guards his Readers ſo particularly againſt *cenſorioufneſs*. He finds by experience that his own doctrines and writings are odious to all ſincere believers, whether Churchmen or Diſſenters: and therefore wiſhes, as any other perſon would in his circumſtances, to eſcape untouched; becauſe his religion is too unſound to bear any rough handling. But he who has uſed the Word of God ſo freely, and has not ſcrupled to accuſe the Church of Error, abſurdity, and the utmoſt impiety, becauſe it does not agree with his fancy, muſt not expect to be commended, till we have renounced our faith, or loſt our underſtandings. I grant we ought to be charitable and merciful to thoſe who offend either through ignorance or infirmity; but neither of theſe will be pleaded by one, who tells us he is guided by Reaſon in every ſtep he has taken.

Every Chriſtian who has not been impoſed upon by ſelf-intereſted Counſellors,

muſt know, that zeal towards God is a duty as neceſſary and laudable as charity towards men. The church of *Epheſus* is praiſed in the Scripture for *not bearing them that are evil, and for trying them which ſay they are Apoſtles and are not, and* finding them *Liars*. Rev. xxii. Without doubt theſe lying Apoſtles in the church of *Epheſus*, whoſe cauſe would not endure the Probe, had many things to ſay againſt the *cenſoriouſneſs* of thoſe who detected them. But we are taught by this and many other examples, that the cenſoriouſneſs of Faith is more acceptable to God than the affected moderation of Infidelity: and therefore every good man will wiſh to be called cenſorious by thoſe, whom it is the duty of every true Chriſtian to cenſure.

The author, however, has fortified himſelf, and endeavours to fortify his Readers againſt every thing that may happen in this way. *Be not moved*, ſays he, *with the raſh cenſures of men*; that is, go on boldly

boldly in your errors, contradicting the Goſpel with an apoſtolical freedom of ſpeech; and if you are confronted with the Scriptures and convicted of blaſphemy, perſevere unto the end. Such is the advice which Pride (the moſt miſchievous of all counſellors) whiſpers into the Ear, "If thou haſt erred, perſiſt and juſtify "it; for 'tis poſſible thou mayeſt get the "Victory by this means, and victory is "oftentimes of more moment than truth. "Perhaps thou art a leading man, and the "Eſteem of thy wiſdom is influential on "the conduct of others; and if ſo, one "baſe Retractation may pull down all "thou haſt built: be ſure then, that it is "honourable, it is edifying, it is for the "Glory of God, that thou ſhouldſt be ob-"ſtinate." Such is the advice which pride communicates in a whiſper; but the Author ſpeaks it out: and what is very wonderful, it ſeems never once to have entered into his head that he may be miſtaken. If any man ſhould be enticed to follow

him, he too is thenceforward to commence infallible; never to be turned, never to be moved, never to hear any thing that is advanced in oppoſition to his impiety. How great and noble would this conſtancy be in a better cauſe! but here it is lamentable to ſee the deluſion to which the human heart is expoſed. Conceit, obſtinacy, and contradiction, when ſitting in judgment upon themſelves, claim all the honours due to perſecuted Truth, Candour, and Wiſdom. The *Dawſons*, the *Evanſons*, the *Blackburnes*, the *Prieſtleys*, and their deputy-trumpeters the *Critical* and *Monthly Reviewers*, are the great examples of Chriſtian meekneſs: and if we caſt our eyes about to enquire whether the Patience as well as the Faith of the Primitive Saints is ſtill remining upon earth, we ſhall find it all aſſembled at the *Feathers Tavern*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A brief Account of the Socinian *Errors, propagated by our modern Petitioners againſt the Liturgy.*

NOW we have conſidered the nature of ſpiritual wickedneſs, and the diſguiſes under which falſe teachers recommend themſelves; we are prepared to take a view of the doctrines they are labouring to introduce. Theſe are to be found in a ſmall publication above mentioned, which calls itſelf *An Appeal to the ſerious and candid Profeſſors of Chriſtianity.* I call them *doctrines* for want of a better word; but they are in reality nothing more than ſo many negatives put upon the doctrines of the Goſpel.

You will not ſo readily underſtand what it is to deny the Chriſtian faith, till you have recollected in the firſt place what the Chriſtian faith is: you will therefore give me

me leave to remind you of it in as few words as poſſible.

The Chriſtian is one who lives by Faith, and depends upon his Faith for his Salvation. He knows, that of himſelf he has no ability to do the Will of God, and therefore applies for the aſſiſtance of that Bleſſed Spirit, who is called the Comforter, and, according to Chriſt's promiſe, is to be in us and abide with us for ever. He knows that man is fallen into Sin and Death, which are the works of the Devil; and that Chriſt came into the world for no other purpoſe but to deſtroy them; to purge away Sin, and to prevail over Death. That as we are in a forfeited ſtate, our Redemption is the Work of God's free Grace, to which we have no claim by nature. That he who effected this Redemption, was the divine perſon of whom the Prophet Iſaiah ſpake, ſaying, *Behold, your God will come and ſave you.* That he fulfilled all the ſacrifices of the Law, by the offering of himſelf once for all, and taſting of Death for

every man: ſo that in him we have now received that atonement which the Law deſcribed, but could not accompliſh.

You have here a ſhort draught of the Chriſtian Religion, with its principal or leading doctrines. The Rainbow, when its colours are moſt ſplendid, is not more viſible in the ſky than theſe doctrines are in the Bible: and therefore good and wiſe men have preached and written and pleaded for them, and ſuffered for them, even unto Death, in almoſt every age and every kingdom of the world; and we ſhall at laſt ſee them crowned in heaven for a faithful adherence to them. What think you then of an author, who being wiſer than his neighbours, offers himſelf to you as a *Lover of the Goſpel, deeply concerned for its honour*, and denies them every one! Who inſtructs us in other words, that human Reaſon is to furniſh a man with all his Religious notions, and that the Scripture is to give them countenance: that man has power enough of himſelf to do the will of God;

God; that he is not born in ſin, nor elected by the divine Grace: that our Redeemer is no Redeemer, but a good moral example; that he is not God, and that he hath made no atonement for our ſins.

I deſire to know how the wit of man, when it has got this new Religion, can put it into a Creed? You cannot begin in the common form, *I believe, &c.* you muſt ſay, "I do *not* believe — that any "thing more than the religion of human "Reaſon is neceſſary to Profeſſors of Chri-"ſtianity; I have no need of Faith; I "want not the Grace of God; I need not "be called nor elected by the divine favour; "I do not own Jeſus Chriſt for my God, "neither do I deſire him to pay any price "for my redemption." I remember when I was a country ſchoolboy, I uſed to hear my companions talk of raiſing the Devil by ſaying the Creed backwards. Such a Confeſſion as this we have now before us ſeems better calculated to anſwer that purpoſe; and is certainly fitter for a Necromancer

mancer than for a *professor of Christianity*. Yet this is the favourite object, for the interests of which a clamorous party hath assembled, contributed, petitioned, and blotted Tons of Paper. For this an unhappy Gentleman hath left his ministry in the Church of England, to preach up the God of Mahometans in a Chamber; and calls this, *confessing Christ before Men!* For this their pamphlets are dispersed by thousands, to turn the affections of the ignorant from the inestimable verities of the Gospel, and inflame their fancies with a set of opinions which can only lead them to perdition: a sort of traffick this, like that of some base hireling, who goes about as an Agent corrupting the minds of the British poor with lying representations, to draw them from their native land over to some barren colony, where they find nothing but disappointment, hard labour, poverty, and putrid distempers. The change from Christianity to Socinianism is as little to be envied, as the transmigra-

tion of thoſe who ſhould leave the ſcenery of Paradiſe and the plenty of Canaan, to aſſociate with the ſavages of the South on a weather-beaten Rock in the Magellanic Ocean; where enjoyment could be nothing but infatuation, and a true ſenſe of their condition, whenever they ſhould return to it, could end in nothing but horror and deſpair.

I ſhall now beg your attention while I ſhew you more particularly the falſe opinions of our Socinian Author, together with the dangerous advice he gives you, concerning the chief doctrines of Chriſtianity: and I perſuade myſelf you will immediately know how to judge of theſe things, when they are ſtripped of his plauſible recommendations.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Uſe of Reaſon *in Matters of Religion.*

HE bids you *diſtruſt all thoſe who decry human Reaſon.* But if you take his advice you muſt diſtruſt the Bible; which informs us in the beginning of *Geneſis*, that *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually:* and ſuch is the doctrine of St. *Paul*, who has taught us, that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* So that he who uſes only his natural Reaſon, without ſome higher principle of diſcernment which is the gift of God, cannot underſtand the matters of the Chriſtian Religion. This poor man forgets that Adam and all his poſterity are fallen into ſin and infirmity,

and hopes you will diſtruſt thoſe whoſe duty it is to put you in mind of it; as indeed the Bible itſelf does, from one end of it to the other. We read in the laſt Chapter of the *Revelation*, that whoſoever *loveth and maketh a lie* will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. What? is it poſſible to *love a lie?* and are not the affections miſerably depraved, which are capable of ſuch a love? eſpecially if that lie is pointed againſt the veracity of God and the truth of his Religion; which is the ſort of lie here intended? and what faculty is it that makes ſuch a Lie? Is it not human Reaſon? No, ſays the Socinian, it is the abuſe of Reaſon. True: and this is the very thing he has forgotten; for man fell from Reaſon into the abuſe of Reaſon. Here lies the danger; not in the uſe of Reaſon as ſuch, but in the abuſe of it, and in the power of ſuch affections as are ſubject to *love lies* better than truth, and which therefore make a tool and a drudge of Reaſon, to

ſerve

ſerve their own bad ends. This is the danger of which we warn you, and this is our manner of *decrying human Reaſon*. We do not mean to decry a mans legs, when we warn him againſt leaping down a precipice to break his neck. Is it not our duty to warn him? eſpecially if he is ſo blind as not to ſee the danger, and at the ſame time ſo conceited as to think he ſees better than we do? Does not the Goſpel itſelf give us ſufficient warning by that deplorable caſe of the blind Phariſees; whoſe ſin was fixed in them paſt recovery, becauſe they ſaid *we ſee?* So that upon theſe conſiderations I venture to ſay to you, in words directly oppoſite to thoſe of your Socinian counſellor, *diſtruſt all thoſe who magnify human Reaſon:* the Devil did it in Paradiſe; the blind Phariſees did it; and our Deiſts and Socinians do it at this day, to the infinite prejudice of thoſe who are weak enough to liſten to them. Beſides, it is proper to advertize you, that in moſt of our modern diſcourſes about Reaſon,

ſon, there is an ambiguity, which it is of the utmoſt conſequence to remove. *Reaſon* has two meanings: it ſignifies the intuitive faculty or *Power of Reaſon* in the human mind, and it alſo ſignifies *Truth of argument* independent of the mind. Theſe two differ from each other, as a man's feet differ from the road that he travels upon: the road may be a good road, lying ſtrait before him; and this is what we call *right Reaſon*; but if he is lame, he cannot get forward; if the road is rough and he is tender footed, he will diſlike it; and if he is whimſical or obſtinate, he will go another way, to ſhew people that he underſtands the road better than you do.

How very wrong is it to affirm, as this author does, *that there is no poſſibility of replying to the Papiſts in their doctrine of tranſubſtantiation but by appealing to Reaſon.* What? ſhall we be ſo raſh as to allow the Papiſts the authority of the Scripture, out of a compliment to our

own

own Reaſon? and ſhall we be ſo ignorant as to do this in a matter where the Scripture expreſsly confutes them? Chriſt informed the Jews that they muſt *eat his fleſh and drink his blood.* They were ſhocked at this as a thing unnatural; and our Saviour proved it to be impoſſible, by obſerving to them, that they ſhould ſee him aſcend into heaven, where his perſon ſhould be out of their reach. Therefore to reconcile all this, and ſhew the meaning, he added, "the fleſh profiteth no-"thing; the words that I ſpeak unto you "they are *ſpirit* and they are life." So that the Papiſts are inexcuſable for following the example of the blinded Jews, and taking his expreſſions in a *bodily* ſenſe. Thus then we may reply to the Papiſts out of that Scriptnre which they allow; and it is better than to appeal to Reaſon: for if by Reaſon, we mean *human Reaſon*, as this man does, then *our* Reaſon is no rule to *theirs:* but if by Reaſon we mean *right Reaſon*, or *Truth of argument*, then

that

that truth in ſcriptural ſubjects is to be laid down from the Scripture: and in my opinion this Author has acted neither wiſely, nor like a *proteſtant*, in giving it up to the Papiſts.

He ſets us to argue with a Mahometan in the ſame abſurd manner. You muſt *bid the Mahometan uſe his Reaſon*, and then he cannot but ſee our Religion to be better than his. This is a very eaſy method to convert the Mahometan: we can bid him uſe his reaſon, with very little trouble to ourſelves; but, I pray, who muſt enable him to do it? for man is unhappily fallen into the abuſe of Reaſon; and the blinded Turk, like the blinded Jew, is confirmed in this abuſe by Education: ſo that here is a knot that can never be untied, without bringing in the Grace of God and the power of Faith. It was foretold of the Jews, that they ſhould be *ſmote with blindneſs*, and ſhould *grope at noon day as the blind gropeth in darkneſs*. They are now in this ſtate, the ſlaves of paſſion,

prejudice, intereſt, and diſaffection: and what are we to do with them? we muſt ſend our Author to them, and he will bid them *uſe their Reaſon.* But if we ſend a Chriſtian to them who has read his Bible, he will bid them pray to God for that faith which is his gift, and reſign themſelves to be directed by him, as St. *Paul*, their pattern, did, before the ſcales of Jewiſh blindneſs fell from his Eyes. Theſe things are ſufficient to ſhew, that Reaſon without faith cannot lead us to God; and that by itſelf it is no ſufficient guide in matters of Religion. You will aſk, how then am I to judge of the ſenſe of Scripture? am I not to depend upon my Reaſon? The Apoſtle ſays not; for that the Scriptures are able to make us wiſe unto Salvation *through faith that is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Of this faith our Author ſays not a ſingle word, though the juſt live by it, and the Scriptures are full of it. How does it happen that the Jew knows nothing of the Scripture, but be-

cauſe he is deſtitute of this principle? Though the *Socinians* are of opinion, that the Jews have always been right in the firſt and great commandment, and the Chriſtian Church always wrong in the ſame from the beginning. Such is the perſuaſion of theſe men of *Reaſon!*

CHAP. V.

Of the Power of Man to do the Will of God.

THIS propoſition, that man has power of himſelf to do the will of God, is repugnant to the whole Goſpel; and eſpecially to that declaration of Chriſt, *without me ye can do nothing:* yet for this propoſition our *Socinian* has ſoberly pleaded; attempting to prove it from thoſe words of the Scripture, where God ſaith to the people, *turn ye from your evil ways, why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?*

rael? Hence he argues, that the people had *power to turn themſelves*, otherwiſe God would not have required it. But unleſs we are to take the Scripture by halves, we ſhall find it ſaid by the people and by their prophet, *turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we ſhall be turned.* Lam. v. 21. and Jer. xxxi. 18. ſo that if both theſe paſſages are laid together, it follows, that in the great work of Converſion there is a part for man and a part for God; as in that exhortation of the Apoſtle, *work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* Phil. ii. 12. There was a man who came to our Saviour with a withered hand, of which he had loſt the uſe: yet Chriſt ſaid unto him, *ſtretch forth thine hand.* On this occaſion our Author might argue, that Chriſt did not heal this man, for that he muſt have had the uſe of his hand, otherwiſe he would not have been commanded to ſtretch it out. But this would be very

ſuperficial reaſoning: for the man, in faith and obedience to the word of Chriſt, attempted to ſtretch forth his hand, and in the attempt received that power which was neceſſary to effect it. It is juſt ſo with us; and without queſtion the miracle was deſigned to illuſtrate our own caſe. God commands us, with our withered faculties, to do his will: we endeavour to do it; and in the attempt receive that ability which is neceſſary to accompliſh it. In all theſe caſes, the will of man and the power of God operate together. We turn ourſelves, and God turneth us: the man ſtretched out his hand, and Chriſt ſtretched it out for him; we work out our ſalvation, and God worketh in us at the ſame time. This is what appears when we lay the Scripture together: and you ſee how dangerous it is to liſten to thoſe who argue from a ſcrap of the Bible, miſunderſtood and perverted, ſo as to render the grace of God of none effect.

Power

Power in man to do the will of God, ſays the author, *is no foundation for pride; for what have we that we have not received?* In this he ſays well: but it is the great queſtion between the Chriſtians and the Deiſts, whether we have this power by nature, or whether we derive it from the ſpirit of Chriſt? whether we have it in conſequence of our birth from Adam, or of our other ſecond birth from the ſpirit? If from Adam, then there was no occaſion for Chriſtianity: if all was right by nature, then there are no *works of the Devil* to be *deſtroyed,* and Chriſt need not have come into the world. But then it is objected, that if God helps us by the miraculous powers of his Spirit, this doctrine muſt encourage us to preſumption, and to put off our reformation in hope of ſome future ſudden converſion. To be ſure it may do this: and ſo may all the doctrines of the Goſpel be abuſed when they fall into bad hands. Some were ſo perverſe as to argue in favour of an abundance of

ſin,

ſin, that the grace of God might abound in forgiving it: but the Apoſtle did not therefore withdraw his doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt: he ſtated the caſe, corrected the abuſe, and left his doctrine in poſſeſſion as before. So muſt we do now: if any ill uſe is made of the Goſpel, we muſt not give the Goſpel up, but demonſtrate the abuſe, and ſhew how it is to be rectified.

CHAP VI.

Of original Sin.

IN this Chapter, the Author allows that we *ſuffer* by the ſin of Adam, but ſays it is impoſſible we ſhould have *ſinned* in him. Whether we have ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, and how far his individual offence may be ours, is a nice queſtion: but the doctrine of original ſin may be ſettled without it.

If

If in conſequence of Adam's tranſgreſſion, we have derived from him a conſtitution, of which ſin is the natural fruit, then ſin is *original* in human nature, and comes into the world with us. If nothing but death had entered into the world by means of Adam's offence, the doctrine might have been doubtful; but the Apoſtle teaches us, that when death entered into the world, *ſin entered* with it; and that death *has paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned:* the effect is permanent in our ſuffering, as the cauſe is permanent in our conſtitution. The Apoſtle therefore perſiſts to ſpeak of mankind, as being under the *Law of ſin and death*; not of death only, but of ſin alſo; and that *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus* hath made them *free* from both. The name given to the ſinful nature of man is that of *fleſh*, in oppoſition to the renewed ſpirit of a Chriſtian. I know, ſays the Apoſtle, that in me (that is, in my *fleſh*) dwelleth no good thing; and in the verſe before, he ſpeaks

ſpeaks of *ſin dwelling in him.* At laſt he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, "who ſhall deliver me from the body of "this death?" This *fleſh*, this *body of ſin*, this *body of death*, which is alſo called the *old man*, and is pronounced to be *corrupt*, are ſo many expreſſions affirming that ſin is original in man's nature. And if there were no other proof of it in the Bible, this conſideration alone would be ſufficient, that none can enter into the kingdom of God unleſs he is *born again:* for there can be no occaſion to ſave us by a new birth, unleſs we are loſt by the old.

CHAP. VII.

Of Election and Reprobation.

HOW far the decrees of God are *arbitrary*, is a queſtion about which we might multiply words to little purpoſe: and if we ſhould calculate how many of the human race will be ſaved and how many will be loſt, we ſhould employ our-

ourſelves to as little effect. There is only one thing here to be obſerved. Our Author affirms, that *as ſurely as we derive our Being from a juſt and merciful God, the terms on which we come into the world are advantageous to us.* This muſt undoubtedly be true, ſo far as theſe terms are introduced by the Creator himſelf: but it is very mean logic which argues, that becauſe God is juſt and merciful, man is on the ſame terms now as when he was firſt created: for this is but to ſay in other words, that becauſe God is juſt and merciful, therefore he hath lied to us in his account of the fall and its conſequences. Neither do theſe give us any ground of complaint againſt the juſtice and mercy of God: for he removed from himſelf the beginning of all evil and vanity into the liberty of the creature; as he hath reſerved in himſelf the beginning of all reſtitution to the liberty of his grace; in virtue of which liberty, he calleth whom he pleaſes, at what time he pleaſes, and *divideth to every man ſeverally as he will.* This li-

berty of calling and diſtributing our Author diſputes with him; affirming that we certainly (as ſure as God is juſt) come into the world on advantageous terms, and enjoy theſe terms without being called to them. But the Scripture, which is of better authority, informs us that God *added to his Church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*, and that all the members of it are elected to the divine privilege of being fellow-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt; to which they certainly have no right by nature. The *gifts* and *calling* of God are mentioned together; becauſe it is merely of his free *gift* that we Gentiles have been *called* to the terms of his holy Religion. The God who called *Abraham* from his country and kindred, and afterward called the Gentiles throughout the world by the miniſtry of his Apoſtles, *granting* them repentance unto life, hath by the ſame act of Grace entitled us to the benefits of the Evangelical Charter: and when we are no longer worthy of our vocation, he may diſfranchiſe us; or, to uſe the language of the Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, he that graffed us into his Church, may cut us off from it, and reject us, as he hath actually rejected the Jews for an example to us. It is now as poſſible for a man to forfeit his ſtation under the Goſpel, as it was for Adam to forfeit paradiſe: and the ready way to this, is proudly to arrogate ſuch rights as we have not: for thus the Jews did. They boaſted that they had *Abraham for their Father*, and were *never in bondage*. So the *Socinian* boaſts, that he is born to terms of advantage, and denies that he is under the bondage of ſin.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Divinity of Chriſt.

IT would take up too much room to examine and ſettle all the texts our author has perverted; neither is there any occaſion for it. His doctrine will very ſoon be overturned. "*If you aſk*, ſays

" he, *who then is Jeſus Chriſt, if he be not*
" *God; I anſwer in the words of St. Peter,*
" *addreſſed to the Jews after his reſurrec-*
" *tion and aſcenſion, that Jeſus of Naza-*
" *reth was a man approved of God,* &c.
" *and* man *muſt mean the ſame kind of Be-*
" *ing with ourſelves.*" The taſk therefore which he impoſes upon you, is only this: that when you find Jeſus of Nazareth called *our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, our God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, God manifeſt in the fleſh,* Jehovah *our righteouſneſs, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the prince of Life, the Lord of Glory, by whom all things in heaven and earth were created* and *by whom* they *now conſiſt, in whoſe perſon* there was *God reconciling the world to himſelf,* even *all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily:* I ſay, when you read theſe and numberleſs other expreſſions to the ſame effect, you are to find ways of bringing them down to ſuch a ſenſe, as to leave nothing in them all,

but

but Jeſus of Nazareth, *a Being of the ſame kind with yourſelves.* My brethren, if you think this can be done, then you are too far gone for me to reclaim you. If you think it cannot, then you are no converts of this Author, and I need give you no farther trouble on this part of our ſubject.

CHAP. IX.

Of Atonement for Sin by the Death of Chriſt.

AS the *Socinians* deny the fall of man, they cannot be conſiſtent without denying all its conſequences; of which the doctrine of atonement is one of the moſt conſiderable. And a doctrine it is, ſo plain and ſtriking, that all mankind who have had any notion of God's purity and their own guilt, have joined in the practice of offering ſacrifices to avert the wrath of inviſible powers; thus giving univerſal teſtimony to that great principle of the law and the Goſpel, that *without ſhedding*

ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion. And this general attachment to the notion of *expiation* diſpoſed the Gentiles to embrace the ſacrifice of Chriſt, in whom they found that atonement which they had all deſired, and therefore the prophet ſcrupled not to call him *the Deſire of all nations.* But in this capacity, he is not deſireable to the *Socinians*, who have found out another way of acceptance. They hold that nothing is neceſſary but mere repentance and moral reformation on the part of ſinners, and that God on his part is bound by his goodneſs to forgive them for nothing. But now, what are we to do with all thoſe declarations of the Scripture, which ſpeak of Jeſus Chriſt as a *ſacrifice for Sin?* In anſwer to which, I may venture to aſſure you, that the ſame ingenuity which proves Jeſus Chriſt to be no more than a man, can as eaſily prove that he was no ſacrifice. It is true, ſay they, he is called a ſacrifice, but only in a *figurative expreſſion*, as our prayers and praiſes are called ſacri-

fices. His death was no ſin-offering, but only an example of patient ſuffering for his Religion; an example to us to ſuffer in like manner, if we are called upon: and this, ſays our author in his canting way, *was a noble ſacrifice indeed.* So that a noble ſacrifice is no ſacrifice at all. And now, my brethren, is not this a noble way of interpreting the Scripture? Chriſt died *for our Sins*; and what does it mean? Why, that he died for his own religion! and if we die in like manner, then we are as truly a ſacrifice for him as he was for us: and ſo ſaith the Quaker, that *the blood of Chriſt was no more than the blood of any other ſaint.* But what ſaith the Scripture? *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us.* Did not the Paſſover and its blood ſtop the execution of that vengeance which fell upon the Egyptians? If Chriſt then is our paſſover, it muſt follow that his blood now does for us, what the blood of the Paſcal Lamb did for the Hebrews in Egypt: but that blood was *expiatory*; and therefore ſo

is his; according to that of St. *Paul*, *we have* redemption *through* his blood, *even the forgiveneſs of our ſins*. Was the Paſſover an *example* to the Hebrews? did it die for *its own religion?* No: its blood was accepted for the ſaving of the people of God, when the unbelieving were deſtroyed: and therefore Chriſt's blood is accepted for the ſame end; otherwiſe he can be no paſſover. Indeed, ſo falſe is it that Chriſt's ſacrifice was *figurative*, that there never was any *true* and *proper ſacrifice* but his only. The *blood of Bulls and of Goats and of Lambs*, which were offered daily under the law, and had the appearance of real ſacrifices, could not accompliſh what it aimed at: it could not purge the conſcience from a ſenſe of guilt: and to ſhew that it had not done ſo, theſe ſacrifices were offered repeatedly, day by day, and year by year: but Chriſt offered himſelf *once for all*, and by that offering *perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*. With the merits of this ſacrifice he now appears, as

our

our high Prieſt, in the preſence of God for us, as the high Prieſt of the Jews went into the moſt holy place of the temple once a year with the blood of the yearly ſacrifice. We are far from denying that Chriſt was an *example* to us in his *Death* as well as in his *life:* but he was not *only* an example; as the *Socinian* falſely aſſerts. He was an *Interceſſor (a)*, a *Mediator (b)*, a *temple (c)*, a *Prieſt (d)*, a *ſacrifice (e)*, a *ranſom (f)*, a *price of redemption (g)*, a *propitiation (h)*, an *atonement (i)*, a *lamb ſlain for the ſins of the World (k):* he was in ſhort all that the Law exhibited: and inſtead of being a ſacrifice only in figure, all the ſacrifices that had been before him from the beginning of the world, were the figures of which he himſelf, once for all in the end of the world, was the ſubſtance and reality,

(a) Heb. vii. 25. *(b)* Ibid. ix. 15. *(c)* John ii. 21, *(d)* Heb. iv. 14. *(e)* Ibid. ix. 26. *(f)* Matth. xx. 28. *(g)* 1 Cor. vi. 20 *(h)* 1 John ii. 2. *(i)* Rom. v. 11, *(k)* John i. 29.

If you wiſh to ſee the whole doctrine of atonement confirmed and explained in a ſingle text, conſider what the Apoſtle hath ſaid *Heb.* x. 26, 27. *If we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* This teaches us, that a fire from heaven is due to ſinners, and muſt fall upon thoſe ſinners themſelves, unleſs a ſacrifice, expoſing itſelf in their ſtead, ſhall turn away the indignation that awaits them. Chriſt is this ſacrifice, accepted of God as our ſubſtitute: but if we depart from our profeſſion, deſpiſing the advantage of this ſubſtitution, then we can find *no other ſacrifice*, but muſt receive the divine wrath in our own perſons. When God ſhall be revealed as once on Mount *Sinai*, and that *fiery indignation* which is looked for ſhall be falling upon the *adverſaries* of the Goſpel, then we ſhall ſee the neceſſity of this

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ſacrifice for ſin: and if the ſophiſtry of any ſeducer ſhall have tempted us to rely on ſome other method of Salvation, we ſhall curſe the hour in which we liſtened to him.

CHAP. X.

Concluſion.

YOU are not to wonder, my brethren, either at the abſurdity or wickedneſs of theſe attempts which are made upon your Faith: the Scripture hath told us, the time ſhould come when they *will not endure ſound doctrine*, but be poſſeſſed with an Itch of Novelty; and as numbers give credit to any falſe perſuaſion, it is natural for them to wiſh that you may *endure ſound doctrine* as little as they do. With this view, they take all poſſible pains to ſpread their opinions; which, as you have ſeen, are very flattering to human pride; and it is an old ſaying, that flat-

terers are eaſily believed. No deep reaſoning is requiſite, when the treachery of your own hearts aſſiſts them in their work. You may judge, therefore, that your ſituation is dangerous: and when you are convinced of this, it is hoped you will be on your guard: and now I have endeavoured, as my Duty requires, to ſhew you what the enemies of your faith have to ſay in one of their pieces, you may be able to judge of the reſt for yourſelves. So for the preſent, I ſhall conclude with that advice of St. *John—Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God: becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world.*

FINIS

REFLEXIONS

ON THE

GROWTH of HEATHENISM

AMONG

MODERN CHRISTIANS.

RELIGION

OF

CONSTANTINISM

ALIAS

MODERN CHRISTIANS.

6

REFLEXIONS

ON THE

GROWTH of HEATHENISM

AMONG

MODERN CHRISTIANS:

IN A LETTER TO

A FRIEND AT OXFORD.

Humbly recommended to the ſerious Conſideration of all thoſe who are entruſted with the EDUCATION of YOUTH.

By a PRESBYTER of the CHURCH of ENGLAND.

If the LORD *be* GOD, *follow Him: but if* BAAL, *follow him.* 1 KINGS, xviii. 21.

LONDON,

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MDCCLXXVI.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reader may be ſhocked when he is told, that there is a diſpoſition to Heathenism in an age of ſo much improvement, and pronounce the accuſation improbable and viſionary; but he is requeſted to weigh impartially the facts here offered, and then to form his judgment. The following Letter was intended only for the inſpection of a friend; but if there is any tendency in the public to ſuch a peculiar kind of corruption, as is here pointed out, they ought to have ſome warning of it; and therefore it has been judged that the preſent publication can be neither impertinent nor unſeaſonable.

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REFLEXIONS, &c.

DEAR SIR,

A Worthy gentleman, who is a collector of things rare and curious in their ſeveral kinds, ſhewed me a large ſhoeing-horn, which as tradition reports had been the property of an ancient abbot of *St. Edmund's Bury*. This relic of antiquity is very handſomely engraved with figures repreſenting the ſeven works of charity, which are, the giving of bread to the hungry, drink to the thirſty, cloaths to the naked, lodging to ſtrangers, viſiting the ſick, and priſoners, and burying the dead. On this my learned friend took occaſion to remark, that in the ages before the Reformation, the ſubjects of the ornamental arts, which are now ſo univerſally taken from the Heathen My-

thology, were then generally borrowed from the Holy Scripture, and had ſome pious relation to the doctrines of Chriſtianity. Of this he ſhewed me another remarkable inſtance in the powder-horn of King Henry VIII. which is adorned with the hiſtory of St. Stephen's martyrdom, in elegant figures of ivory. Whereas, had an artiſt of this age been ſet to invent a device for a powder-horn, his imagination would immediately have ſuggeſted to him the fall of *Phaeton*, the *Cyclops* forging thunderbolts, or ſome like alluſion to the hiſtory and effects of fire from the ſtores of the Heathen Mythology.

I ſhall not ſtop here to diſpute which of theſe two ſources, Paganiſm or Chriſtianity, will furniſh the beſt ſubjects for poets, painters, and ſculptors to work upon: but I cannot help obſerving, that the general ſtate of religion and manners may be judged of by the ſtyle and taſte adopted in the ornamental arts. There might

might be a faulty ſuperſtition, with a mixture of ſimplicity bordering upon ignorance, in the works of former ages; but the ſtyle of them ſhewed that Chriſtianity was the religion of the country, and that the ſeveral particulars of the ſacred hiſtory were then held in honour, as the ſubjects moſt worthy to be offered for admiration, and recommended by all the efforts of human ingenuity.

This was certainly the perſuaſion of thoſe times: but in the preſent age the public taſte can ſeldom find any thing but Heathen matter to work upon: from which it is natural to infer that Heathenism is in better repute than formerly; and thence it will follow, that the public regard to Chriſtianity, and all that relates to it, is proportionably declined.

Polydore Virgil, in his work *De rerum inventoribus*, tells us how in the middle ages of the church, they chriſtened the ceremonies of the Pagan ſuperſtition, and adapted their fables to the myſteries of

the Chriſtian worſhip: which obſervation will undoubtedly account for much of the pomp that appears in the celebrities of the modern church of Rome. There might poſſibly be a very good intention in thus attempting to reclaim what had been miſapplied, in order to make an impreſſion upon vulgar minds in their own way; but there was often great weakneſs and want of judgment in the manner, which ſhould never be propoſed for imitation. Thus much of their humour ought to be retained, that the true religion ſhould, in all places and on all occaſions, be ſeen to preſerve its ſuperiority over the falſe; not merely becauſe one is better than the other, but becauſe the one is worthy of God, and will raiſe honourable ſentiments in men, while the other was never intended for any thing but an engine of the devil, to infuſe ſentiments of impurity, obſcenity, pride, and vanity, diſhonourable to God, and deſtructive to man. Yet the taſte for Hea-

then learning, which began to prevail about the times of the Reformation hath been productive of an evil, which hath been growing upon us for two hundred years paſt, and hath at length given to Heatheniſm the upper hand in almoſt every ſubject. The fabulous objects of the Grecian mythology have even got poſſeſſion of our churches; in one of which I have ſeen a monument, with elegant figures as large as the life, of the three Fates, *Clotho*, *Lacheſis*, and *Atropos*, ſpinning and clipping the thread of a great man's life: by which ſpecies of memorial, he is taken as it were out of the hands of the true God, whom we Chriſtians worſhip in our churches, and turned over to the miſerable blindneſs of Heathen Deſtiny: not to mention the inſult and profanation with which Heathen idols are brought into a Chriſtian temple. In the ſame church, the baptiſtery or font is removed almoſt out of ſight; and when found, has a very mean and unwor-

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thy appearance, as if it were intended for ſome other uſe: ſo natural is it for thoſe improvements which exalt Heatheniſm to debaſe Chriſtianity. How conſpicuous are all the temples of the Heathen idols in the famous gardens of *Stowe* in *Buckinghamſhire*; while the pariſh church, which happens to ſtand within the precincts, is induſtriouſly ſhrouded behind evergreens and other trees, as an object impertinent, or at leaſt of no importance to a ſpectator of modern taſte. In our rural ornaments we have temples to all the pagan divinities; and in the city a *Pantheon*, wherein there is a general aſſembly of the ſons and daughters of pleaſure, under the auſpices of the whole tribe of Heathen dæmons.

This taſte is not only profane and corrupting whenever it takes place, but the productions of it are ſometimes monſtrouſly abſurd and incongruous: it begets a certain inattention to propriety, which admits of falſe and ſhocking aſſociations, conſiſt-

conſiſtent neither with goodneſs of taſte nor correctneſs of judgment. When I ſee the figure of a cock upon the top of a ſteeple, I am reminded of that ſacred bird who was a monitor to St. *Peter*, and through his example is now giving a daily leſſon to all believers. When I ſee the globe and croſs on the top of St. *Paul*'s, I rejoice in the exaltation of him who was humbled for our ſakes, but is now the head of all principality and power, to the church and to the world; and I feel a ſecret ſatisfaction in reflecting, that a croſs ſo exalted has no reproach in it, as if the offence of it were ceaſed. But when I ſee the dragon upon Bow-ſteeple, I can only wonder how an emblem ſo expreſſive of the devil, and frequently introduced as ſuch into the temples of idolaters, found its way to the ſummit of a Chriſtian edifice. I am ſo jealous in theſe matters, that I muſt confeſs myſelf to have been much hurt by a like impropriety in a well-known muſic-room, where there is

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an organ conſecrated by a ſuperſcription TO APOLLO, although the praiſes of *Jehovah* are generally celebrated by it once every month in the choral performances: and it ſeems rather hard that *Jehovah* ſhould condeſcend to be a borrower, while *Apollo* is the proprietor.

In all the ſciences the tokens of this Pagan infection are very obſervable. In politics we hear of nothing but *Brutus*, and are ſtunned with the heroiſm of rebels, and the virtue of regicides. In morality, how venerable are the characters of *Socrates*, and *Cato* the ſuicide: while the *Spartan* virtue is become the grand object of patriotic emulation; though I am ſure it would make a ſhocking figure if the moral character of that commonwealth were impartially repreſented on the authority of *Plutarch*. Botany, which in ancient times was full of the bleſſed Virgin *Mary*, and had many religious memorials affixed to it, is now as full of the Heathen *Venus*, the *Mary* of

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our modern virtuoſi. Amongſt the ancient names of plants, we find the *Calceolus Mariæ*, *Carduus Mariæ*, *Carduus benedictus*, our Lady's Slipper, our Lady's Thiſtle, our Lady's Mantle, the *Alchymilla*, &c. but modern improvements have introduced the *Speculum Veneris*, *Labrum Veneris*, Venus's Looking-glaſs, Venus's Baſin (the *Dipſacus*), Venus's Navel-wort, Venus's Fly-trap, and ſuch like: and whereas the ancient botaniſts took a pleaſure in honouring the memory of the Chriſtian ſaints, with their *St. John's* wort, *St. Peter's* wort, herb *Gerard*, herb *Chriſtopher*, and many others; the modern ones, more affected to their own honour, have dedicated ſeveral newly-diſcovered genera of plants to one another; of which the *Hottonia*, the *Sibthorpia*, are inſtances, with others ſo numerous and familiar to men of ſcience, that they need not be ſpecified.

But in poetry, the ſervility of Chriſtians is moſt notorious of all. Here they fol-

low as implicitly as if the Heathen Muſes had deprived them of their wits. If any machinery is to be introduced, it muſt all be according to the Heathen model, by a law as invariable as that of the *Medes* and *Perſians*. But it ſhould be conſidered, that when an Heathen poet made uſe of his divine machinery, he only ſpoke as he believed, introducing ſuch powers into his verſe as he profeſſed to worſhip in proſe. After he had been offering ſacrifices in the temple of *Minerva*, it was natural for him to bring her in to the aſſiſtance of his hero: but when a Chriſtian moraliſt does the ſame, propoſing a pattern of virtue on the Heathen plan for the purpoſes of education, he goes out of his way, to adopt what he knows to be as abſurd in itſelf as it is contrary to his profeſſion. If there is a natural oppoſition between truth and falſhood, we are now as irrational in betraying a partiality to the profane objects of Heatheniſm, as the Heathens themſelves would have been, had

had they ſhewn the like regard to the ſacred objects of the Bible; only with this difference, that they would have taken up what was better than their own, whereas we incline to that which is worſe: their choice would have brought them nearer to God; ours brings us nearer to the Devil. How ſtrange would it have been, if while their temples were dedicated to *Venus*, *Mars*, and *Bacchus*, their gardens had been adorned with ſtatues of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, the walls of their houſes painted with the deſtruction of *Sodom*, the overthrow of *Pharoah*, the delivery of the Two Tables on Mount *Sinai*, and ſuch like ſubjects of Sacred Hiſtory! Who would not have inferred in ſuch a caſe, that their temples were frequented out of form, while their inclinations were toward the law of Moſes, and the God of the Hebrews? The Heathen prieſts would never have been ſilent on ſuch an occaſion: they would have exclaimed againſt this double-faced diſaffection, and have given

the alarm againſt all that were guilty of it, as perſons ready to apoſtatize from the religion of their anceſtors. But alas! no Heathens were ever found to be thus inconſiſtent: they were faithful to their profeſſion, and with one mind abominated every thing that was Jewiſh, for the relation it bore to the Jewiſh worſhip; always railing againſt that nation as low and contemptible, and their religion as fooliſh and ſuperſtitious. We alſo ſhould be as ſincere in our profeſſion as they were in theirs, and ſhould expreſs our averſion againſt folly and profaneneſs wherever they occur, unleſs our intellects were vitiated with falſe wiſdom from the common forms of education. To take little things for great, and great for little, is the worſt misfortune that can befall the human underſtanding. The machinery of Heatheniſm appears great to ſcholars, becauſe it has been deſcribed by great wits of antiquity, with great words and muſical verſes; and being offered very early

early to the mind at ſchool, there is a natural prepoſſeſſion in favour of it. But is there really any thing great in the character of *Æolus*, ſhutting up the winds in a den? In *Vulcan* the blackſmith, hammering thunderbolts with his one-eyed journeymen? In *Neptune*, a man living under water like a fiſh, and flouriſhing a pitch-fork to ſtill the raging of the ſea? If theſe things are taken literally, according to that poetical character in which the ancient writers uſed them, and in which only they are adopted by the moderns, they are ſo mean and ridiculous, that when the Heathens were preſſed with them after the commencement of the Goſpel, they could find no way of upholding their dignity but by reſolving them into their phyſical character; that is, by accommodating them to the powers and operations of nature, to which they alluded with a ſort of myſtical reſemblance *.

Notwithſtanding all this, ſuch is the at-

* This is done at large by *Phurnatus*, in his book Περι Θεων φυσεως, publiſhed in *Gale's Opuſcula Mythologica*.

tach-

tachment to the Heathen models, that *Boileau* lays it down as a principle in epic poetry, that no grandeur of deſcription can be attained without introducing Jupiter, Juno, Pallas, Neptune, with the whole tribe of Pagan divinities: and if any Chriſtian ſhould be deterred by a ſenſe of his profeſſion from making uſe of theſe *ancient ornaments*, as he calls them, his ſcruples can be aſcribed to nothing but a vain and ſuperſtitious fear. And indeed our poets have generally aſſented to this doctrine of *Boileau*, without finding themſelves much embarraſſed by the terrors of Chriſtian ſuperſtition; inſomuch that if any ſtranger were to judge of our religion from the practice of our poets and tragedians, he would take Paganiſm for the eſtabliſhed religion of the country. For beſides hymns to Venus and Bacchus, and Wood Nymphs, and Water Nymphs *,

* The laſt thing that occurred to me of this kind, was, a prayer of poor *Phyllis Wheatley*, the negro poeteſs, to *Neptune*, entreating his providence to preſerve her friend in a voyage.

we ſee virtues and attributes imperſonated and deified as they were of old: we have odes to Liberty, odes to Health, odes to Contentment; in which Health is prayed to for health, and Contentment is entreated to give contentment, that is, to be the cauſe of itſelf; with many other abſurdities, in which the licence of poetry is not very conſiſtent with common ſenſe, and much leſs with the ſenſe of religion.

What is more common with poets than to make a compliment of the creation to Jupiter? and conſequently of all thoſe ſovereign attributes of power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, which are diſplayed in the works of nature; eſpecially in the formation of the human ſpecies? Of this we have a ſpecimen in the following lines by the late celebrated Dean of St. Patrick's.

When Cupid did his grandſire Jove *entreat*
To form *ſome beauty by a new receipt:*

* * * * * * *

Jove *mixt up all, and* his beſt clay employ'd,
Then call'd the happy compoſition Floyd.

If a Latin poet celebrates the nativity and genius of ſome learned man, *Lucina* preſides at his birth, and brings him ſafely into the world; the *Muſes* are his nurſes, *Minerva* teaches him, and *Phœbus* inſpires him. When his death is to be lamented, what can his ſurviving friend ſay for him, on poetical principles, but wiſh himſelf *Orpheus*, that ſo with his lyre he might go down to Hell, and prevail on *Pluto* (the keeper of all dead Chriſtians *) to reſtore him back again?

* The public has been informed, that a proceſſion after the mode of the Heathen funeral rites, was lately celebrated with great pomp, inſtead of Chriſtian burial: in which proceſſion, the heart of a dead Chriſtian was carried through the Elyſian Fields to ſoft muſic, and placed with proper ſolemnity in a very conſpicuous Mauſoleum. Some years ago, a Bacchanalian feſtival was celebrated, and ſacred rites performed before the idol of Bacchus, at the ſame place; the particulars of which are preſerved in ſome public prints of that time.

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This is the poor trite ſtuff, which hath now been repeated for ſome ages paſt: the Heathen Deities have been the objects of poetical gratitude, and the Heathen fables the ſources of poetical conſolation! Such poets muſt excuſe me, if I remind them of their error in words like thoſe of the Apoſtle, "O fooliſh Chriſtians, who hath bewitched you, that ye "ſhould return to theſe beggarly elements, before whom Jeſus Chriſt hath "been ſet forth, as alive from the dead? "Having begun in Chriſtianity, are ye "to be made perfect by Heatheniſm? "Have ye ſuffered ſo many perſecutions, "and are ye now going back to thoſe "idols, for whoſe ſakes ye were appointed as ſheep to the ſlaughter? The "folly which returned from the freedom "of the Goſpel back to the bondage of "the law, was nothing when compared "to that which trifles with Omnipotence, "and gives to idols and devils the honour "due only to the true God."

For the origin of poetry, *Boileau*, the French critic, can go no higher than to the Heathen Oracles:

Theſe miracles from numbers did ariſe,
Since which in verſe Heaven taught his myſteries;
And by a prieſt poſſeſs'd with rage divine,
Apollo *ſpoke from his* prophetic ſhrine.

Dryden's Tranſl.

How ſerious is this! One would think Apollo had written the Bible; or at leaſt that the oracular verſes of Heathen diviners were prior to the ſacred ſongs of the Scripture, and of equal authority. But when great wits are tranſported into the fabulous regions of poetry, they become inſenſible of the wickedneſs of diabolical impoſture (for ſuch was the practice at the ſhrines of Apollo) and forget what they owe to truth, reaſon, and revelation.

I think *Milton* hath made it appear, that what is great in poetry may well be attain-

attained without borrowing any thing from the *ancient ornaments* of the Pagan machinery; and indeed his poem of *Paradiſe Loſt* never ſinks below itſelf more effectually, than when he condeſcends to treat his ſubject in the Heathen phraſe, and embelliſh it with Heathen alluſions, as where *Adam* and *Eve* are compared to *Jupiter* and *Juno**; which is ſo foreign and unnatural, that the imagination being ſhocked with the impropriety, becomes incredulous, and then the pleaſure of reading is loſt. Perhaps it may be imputed to the formality of Puritaniſm, that his poem was not ſtill more deformed with the impertinent ornaments of profane literature. In that age, the religion and morality of the claſſical writers, had not obtained quite ſo much authority as afterwards, when they were called in to give their ſanction to Hereſy, and to corrupt the higheſt myſteries of the Chriſtian

* Book iv. 499.

faith. Then was the pernicious example of *Cato* ſet up, who hath been followed ever ſince as a pattern of ſuicide, becauſe the ſin was unfortunately varniſhed over by the ſentiments and diction of that elegant and eminent ſcholar Mr. *Addiſon*; who ſpoke of *treading on claſſical ground* with that veneration, with which the palmers and pilgrims of the twelfth century viſited the Holy Land, which had been the ſcene of our bleſſed Saviour's miracles.

Who does not know, that Heathen fragments are now ſought after as zealouſly as Chriſtian relics were collected in former ages? There was a time when all the curious people of this nation were alarmed and animated if the bones of ſome ancient hermit were found, or ſome treatiſe recovered and added to the works of a legendary writer. Now the like alarm is ſpread, if an Etruſcan vault is opened, and ſome old broken pitchers are brought to light, with groteſque ill-de-

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ſigned figures upon them. When ſome great men, famous for their parts and learning, have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a taſte for Heathen principles and Heathen curioſities, the whole tribe of inferiors follows them of courſe, as the vulgar on all other occaſions ſubmit readily to faſhion, the common rule of thoſe who have no judgment. That the ſtudy of antiquity is not entertaining and curious, I do not mean to ſay; neither would I ſuggeſt that it is without its uſe; for certainly it is both uſeful and reputable to know many things which it is not neceſſary to admire: but ſome minds are ſo ill prepared to make proper diſtinctions, that their curioſity riſes inſenſibly to a religious veneration, too often attended with a diſaffection toward every thing that relates to the Chriſtian character.

It is much to be lamented, that while we are learning from the ſcholars of profane antiquity, the beauties of Imagery, the graces of Diction, the arts of Oratory,

tory, and the harmony of Poetry, we are not better upon our guard againſt their principles, which ſteal upon us through the vehicles of Poetry and Oratory, till our taſte is wholly vitiated, and the glorious realities of the Chriſtian revelation become inſipid and inſignificant.

Experience ſhews how difficult it is to dwell with delight upon the expreſſions of Heathen writers, without embracing too many of their ſentiments. When a painter hath exhibited *Thaïs* with all her charms, he that values the lines of the picture, and admires the ſkill of the maſter, may very poſſibly be tempted to luſt after the original, though he is apprized before-hand that ſhe is an infamous and abandoned ſtrumpet.

Dr. *Middleton* confeſſes in one of his letters, that his claſſical engagements had rendered him very ſqueamiſh in his theological ſtudies; and I am well convinced this has been the caſe with many others, who from having their brains filled with Hea-

Heathen notions, and their affections touched with the vanity of conſcious erudition, have contracted a nauſea toward the Bible and its contents, firſt diſreliſhing and at length deliberately oppoſing the Chriſtian doctrines, perhaps without being ſenſible how their minds were originally debauched. If this experiment is fatal in ſo many inſtances, and dangerous in all, it is an alarming conſideration that the firſt ideas conceived by ſchool-boys are for the moſt part of the Heathen ſtamp: and I fear they are too ſeldom inſtructed in due ſeaſon concerning the infinite difference between the true God and the falſe *. I was told once by a ſchool-boy, that one of his companions aſked him very ſeriouſly, which

* This caution hath been laudably obſerved by the judicious editor of the *Selectæ e profanis Scriptoribus Hiſtoriæ*, who hath prefaced his collection with ſuch admonitions and diſtinctions as would render the preſent ſtrictures ſuperfluous, if they were more generally attended to.

was

was the uppermoſt, *Jupiter* or *God Almighty?* And well might the poor child be ignorant of the diſtinction, when his elders, who ought to have had more judgment, have made ſome foul miſtakes in the ſame way; ſuch as that in the *Univerſal Prayer* of Mr. *Pope*, which gives us a new ſort of levelling Theology, unknown to the wiſdom of former ages. When the Jewiſh nation was called out by the prophet *Elijah* to be ſpectators of the grandeſt diſpute the world ever ſaw, that is, to determine whether *Jehovah* or *Baal* was the proper object of religious adoration, Mr. *Pope* could have ſettled it all in a word or two, only by inſtructing the parties that the true God is worſhipped in every climate by thoſe who worſhip any God at all: that the *Saint*, the *Savage*, and the *Sage*, the Hebrew, the Hottentot, and the Greek philoſopher, were the votaries of one and the ſame Divinity. How miſtaken were the poor Chriſtians under all the Roman perſecu-

tions,

tions, in throwing away their lives upon a diſtinction which had no exiſtence! They were brought before the altar of *Jupiter*, and the uſual alternative was propoſed, either to ſuffer death or ſignify their adoration. Had either party been aware of the new levelling principle, they might have been reconciled without proceeding to theſe extremities, and have joined amicably in the ſame ſacrifices. Thus much however we may conclude for certain, that if the poet had been in the like circumſtances, he could not poſſibly have been a martyr, if he believed his own doctrine.

The pious and excellent author of the *Night Thoughts*, who writes as a Chriſtian moraliſt, hath been tempted by the force of cuſtom to tranſgreſs that rule of ſound criticiſm, which obliges us to make every compoſition uniform and of a piece. What occaſion had he thus to adopt the Heathen ſtyle "*that more than miracle the* Gods

"*indulge* *." Why *Gods* in the plural? Why muſt they have the honour of working miracles? And why are the Holy Angels of God, and the red-faced *Bacchus* of Paganiſm, brought together into the ſame poem? Which, to ſay nothing of the impiety of it, can never be reconciled to the rules of propriety and good writing. If we write as Chriſtians, let us keep up to the ſtyle of our profeſſion: if our ſcene is laid upon Heathen ground, then let us take the language of the Heathen writers—*Sit quod vis ſimplex duntaxat & unum.* The Levitical law forbad the people to plough with an ox and an aſs together; and the New Teſtament taking up the ſame principle, commands us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. All I contend for here, is conſiſtency and propriety; and I am ſure the judgment of the beſt critics will bear me out in what I have ſaid.

* Night IId.

The

The caſe of the primitive martyrs, who choſe rather to die than do honour to the Heathen Deities, brings to my remembrance a circumſtance which leſſens my admiration of thoſe antique ſtatues, which, as the productions of genius, are otherwiſe very much to be admired for elegance of deſign and truth of proportion. In times of perſecution it was the cuſtom with the bigots of Heatheniſm to drag the Chriſtians up to the images of their Idol-Gods, either to offer ſacrifice or be put to death: whence it is by no means improbable, that the blood of many innocent Chriſtians may have been barbarouſly ſhed to the honour of ſome ſtatues now in high eſteem with modern virtuoſi of the ſame Chriſtian profeſſion; who, for a little excellence of workmanſhip, admire and reſpect what their purer predeceſſors had reaſon to regard with horror and deteſtation.

Where at laſt will this taſte, which hath been prevailing and increaſing for ſo many

many years, from the days of lord Herbert to the late erection of the *Pantheon*, where, I ſay, will it lead us? Where can it lead us, but to indifference and atheiſm? A Chriſtian corrupted with Heathen affections, degenerates into ſomething worſe than the original Heathens of antiquity. They had great faith in ſuch Gods as they knew, depended upon them devoutly, and applied to them on every public occaſion, either of deprecation or thankſgiving. If we except the *Epicureans*, they inſiſted almoſt univerſally on a ſpecial providence, directing things *pro re natâ*, and were aſſured that the Gods were the avengers of perjury and impiety. But faith in the divine protection, and fear of divine vengeance are but coldly regarded and rarely to be met with in many of their modern diſciples. Sacrifice was practiſed by them, as the eſſential part of religion, for the expiation of private or national guilt; but when the Chriſtian ſacrifice is neglected, and the Heathen ſacrifices

crifices are exploded, nothing remains but a religion without expiation; a thing which never exifted fince the expulfion of Adam from Paradife, till it was begotten of late times in *Socinus*, and his followers, when Chriftian lukewarmnefs engendered with the pride and ignorance of gentile philofophy.

While we have been confidering the cafe of poets, orators, and artifts, how they all ftand affected to Heatheniſm; I had almoft forgotten the philofophers, I mean the natural philofophers, whofe fcience for an hundred years paft, hath been claiming kindred with the Heathen divinity. About the year 1680, it was obferved by an eminent fcholar of that time, that the exact and fcrutinizing fpirit of the fchool-divinity was become neceffary, in order to detect the pretenfions of fome "who were ready by the ftudy "of nature to immerfe God in matter, "and with thofe impieties of *Democritus* "and *Epicurus*, to confound him with

"na-

" nature." In the year 1685 Mr. *Boyle*, in a treatiſe intitled, *A free Inquiry into the vulgarly received notion of Nature*, expreſſed an apprehenſion that the ſame doctrine was likely to gain ground amongſt us; and he gave the alarm to the public in the following emphatic language, which merits well to be conſidered. " Nor are Chriſtians themſelves ſo " much out of danger of being ſeduced " by theſe Heatheniſh notions about an " intelligent world (the ſtoical *anima* " *mundi*), but that even in theſe times " there is lately ſprung up a ſect of men, " as well profeſſing Chriſtianity as pre- " tending to philoſophy; who, (if I be " not miſinformed of their doctrine) do " very much ſymbolize with the ancient " Heathens, and talk much indeed of " God, but mean ſuch a one as is not " really diſtinct from the animated and " intelligent univerſe; but is on that ac- " count very differing from the true God " whom we Chriſtians believe and wor- " ſhip.

"ſhip. And though I find the leaders "of this ſect to be looked upon by ſome "more witty than knowing men, as the "diſcoverers of unheard-of myſteries "in phyſics and natural theology, yet "their hypotheſis does not at all appear "to me to be new, &c." Then he proceeds to ſhew, that this philoſophical God which is not eſſentially different from *Nature* was the Deity of the Heathen Philoſophers, citing ſuch paſſages as that of *Seneca*, *Nihil natura ſine Deo eſt, nec Deus ſine natura, ſed* IDEM *eſt uterque.*

How near the expreſſions of our Doctor *Halley* approach to an avowal of this Heathen opinion in his eulogium on the Newtonian philoſophy, let any impartial perſon judge, when he has conſidered the ſenſe of them. And here let me obſerve by the way, that it is to no purpoſe for any man to give himſelf airs, and tell us that theſe things are popular, and muſt not be ſpoken againſt: they ought to be ſpoken againſt for that very reaſon, be-

cauſe

caſe the whole world does not afford a greater temptation to error than long eſtabliſhed popularity; on which conſideration, all men who wiſh to chain down others to their own favourite errors, are for ever ringing this popularity in their ears. To go on therefore with Doctor *Halley*, whoſe ſentiments concerning God and Nature, are communicated in the following lines:

En tibi norma poli, & divæ libramina Molis,
Computus en Jovis, et quas dum primordia rerum
Conderet, omnipotens ſibi leges ipſe Creator
Dixerit———

Here the *Moles*, or maſs of matter which conſtitutes the world, has the epithet *diva* aſcribed to it, which makes it *divine*: and in another part of the ſame poem the epithet is given to Nature,

———*jamque abdita* DIÆ
Clauſtr patent NATURÆ———

Then the *computus Jovis*, or calculation of Jupiter, ſuppoſing it to allude to the motions

motions of the heavenly bodies, muſt imply that the viſible world is *Jupiter*, as it ſtands in the Heathen Poet—*Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides*: and this ſeems farther evident from the ſentiment which is explanatory of it, viz. that the *Creator* (ſuppoſing *Jupiter* to be he) gave *laws to himſelf*; which is true if God and Nature are the ſame thing; becauſe in that caſe the laws given to Nature, will be laws impoſed upon God. The Pſalmiſt, who diſtinguiſhes rightly between the works and the workmaſter, ſays, "he gave *them* "a law which ſhall not be broken:" and Mr. *Boyle*, in his treatiſe above referred to, hath well remarked, that "God when "he made the world, and eſtabliſhed the "laws of motion, gave them to *Matter*, "and *not to Himſelf* *;" as if he had been cenſuring that expreſſion of Dr. *Halley*, which has been the ſubject of our preſent animadverſion.

If any other Philoſophers have been

* Edit. 168⅚ p. 158.

betrayed by the authority of great names, into the belief of this ſtrange doctrine, it cannot be wondered at, if ſuch are found but badly diſpoſed for the reception of the Chriſtian myſteries: for what concord hath the Heathen *Jupiter* with the *Chriſtian Trinity?* What arguments can be ſtrong enough to perſuade thoſe men of a divine co-equal perſonality in the Godhead, who have relapſed into the reveries of Stoiciſm, and are the votaries of an *anima mundi,* an intelligent univerſe, a Deity immerſed in matter? To ſuch, the notion of a co-eternal Son of God, Creator of all things that exiſt, and who ſhall be ſtill the ſame when nature ſhall wax old, and the heavens ſhall vaniſh away, muſt of neceſſity be contemptible and incredible: and this I apprehend to be one reaſon why we have ſo many Arians among the profeſſed admirers of natural philoſophy.

Let it not be ſaid that I take any pleaſnre in cenſuring: a captious cenſor is an odious character. If the queſtion ſhould be

be put to me, *who made thee a ruler and a judge?* I am ready to anſwer for myſelf, that I ſhall never wiſh to rule where ſo few are inclined to obey, and that I ſhall never judge where my duty will permit me to excuſe. I ſee my country haſting to ruin on many different principles; and I point out one of them, which is the moſt pernicious of all, if it is not in fact the mother of all the reſt. I only ſay what muſt be ſaid by ſomebody, if we are ever to be reclaimed from the perilous conſequences of Pagan corruption: if not, *liberavi animam meam.* Should any perſon aſk me how Chriſtianity is to be baniſhed out of Chriſtendom, as the predictions of the Goſpel give us reaſon to expect it will be, I ſhould make no ſcruple to anſwer, that it will certainly be brought to paſs by this growing affection to Heatheniſm. And therefore it is devoutly to be wiſhed that ſome cenſor would ariſe with the zeal and ſpirit of *Martin Luther*, to remonſtrate effectually againſt this indulgence of Paganiſm, which is more fatal to the inte-

reſts

reſts of Chriſtianity than all the abuſes purged away at the Reformation. This is now the grand abuſe, againſt which the zeal of a *Luther*, and the wit of an *Eraſmus*, ought to be directed: it is the abomination of deſolation ſtanding where it ought not, even in the ſanctuary of Chriſtianity, and is a worſe offence than all the profanations that ever happened to the Jewiſh temple. In the mean time, till the world ſhall be bleſſed with ſuch a monitor, I have preſumed to claim ſome freedom of thought, and liberty of ſpeech, againſt the tyranny of prevailing faſhion: and you will pardon me if I confeſs to you, upon this occaſion, the mean opinion I have long entertained of ſome modern refinements; inſomuch that I could wiſh many of them were exchanged for a little of that religious ſimplicity, which placed the ſeven works of charity upon the ſhoeing horn of the Abbot of St. *Edmund's Bury*.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your's moſt faithfully,

And affectionately.

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